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The Week

UNLESS the Mexican government has decided to placate the United States by suspending its oil and land laws for the present—and no reliable evidence has been offered that this is the case—the relation between the United States and the neighboring republic has entered upon a particularly dangerous stage. Congress has adjourned; most of its members, including a majority of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, have gone to their homes. Public opinion, which a few weeks ago was asserting its strong opposition to the State Department's policy, has relaxed its attention, on the assumption that vigilance is no longer necessary. But, on the contrary, vigilance was never more necessary. There is no reason to suppose that the policy of the American government has been changed. Men like President Coolidge and Secretary Kellogg do not

abandon their plans merely because those plans are shown to be inexpedient, unjust and full of dangerous potentialities. Particularly is this true in regard to Mexico, when you remember the enormous pressure to which Washington is being subjected by men of the type which the President and Secretary of State are most inclined to respect: the capitalists with heavy investments south of the Rio Grande. We see no reason for mincing words in this matter: we believe there is grave danger that some pretext will offer itself, or will be manufactured by interested persons, and the embargo on arms shipments will be raised, thereby enormously accentuating the chance of a successful revolution. The prospect of this is increased by the news that the United States has renounced the anti-smuggling treaty with Mexico of February 23, 1925. President Coolidge himself hinted broadly a few days earlier that this treaty, requiring the United States to notify the Calles government of all shipments across the border, would be a stumbling block in case it were decided to raise the embargo. We believe, for reasons with which our readers are familiar, that such a development would be a tragedy for the Mexican people, and hardly less so for the United States. Yet the only real insurance against it is a continuing storm of protest from our own citizens, so vigorous that even Secretary Kellogg will hesitate to defy it.

SHANGHAI has fallen—or rather, has capitulated to the Cantonese Nationalist army, virtually without resistance from the disorganized Northern defenders. The event so long anticipated is now a matter of history; and it may prove, in the perspective of the years, a turning point of the greatest importance. Whether the final outcome was the result of military skill, or Nationalist propaganda, or, as Mr. Frederick Moore, the strongly partisan correspondent of the New York Times, insists, of bribery, the fact remains that the Cantonese now control the Yangtse Valley and everything south of it; can collect two-thirds of the revenues of the country; and are daily witnessing defections, both among soldiers and leaders, from the armies of their opponent, the discredited and waning Manchurian general, Chang Tso-lin. What will happen next, it

is impossible to prophesy. If military resistance continues on an important scale, the second half of the task, including the capture of Peking, will be more difficult than was the first. There is also the danger—which is, we suspect, much exaggerated in the news despatches—of a split between the right and left wings of the Nationalist party, or of cleavage between outstanding personalities. Finally, there is of course imminent peril of a clash with the foreign powers. At any moment an "incident" may occur, either genuine or manufactured, which will result in armed conflict, with the most serious consequences.

WAR CLOUDS are again hovering over the Balkans; and they are blacker than usual. Italy has been protesting loudly that Yugoslavia is about to attack Albania, being angered by the Tirana treaty which that little country made with the Mussolini government a few months ago. The Jugoslavs declare their innocence, and invite an investigation by the League of Nations to demonstrate the falsity of the Italian charge that their troops have been mobilizing on the Albanian frontier. To this the Italians reply that not only is Yugoslavia making preparations for war, but France is behind her. European opinion generally holds that this time Yugoslavia is probably innocent, and that all the storm has been raised by Italy as a cloak to her own purpose, which is, to make Albania virtually an Italian colony and thereby gain complete control of the Adriatic. If this explanation be accepted, however, the seriousness of the situation is not diminished. Mussolini might easily start a fire which he could not put out. He has the support, generally speaking, of England; and his new arrangement with Rumania is an element of strength for him, unless that country should be too deeply involved with Russia, (which has just sent a strong note to Italy protesting against confirmation of the Rumanian possession of Bessarabia). Moscow, in fact, regards Italy's agreement with Rumania as one more link in the steel chain which, according to the Soviet interpretation, England is busily drawing around Russia; and may decide that the best defense is prompt attack.

NOT THE least serious aspect of the situation is the hostility between France and Italy, which does not abate but increases with the passage of time. While there was no justification for the war scare in Southern France a few weeks ago, which actually succeeded in frightening some tourists away from the Riviera, no one can deny that a whole series of Italian policies is troubling the Quai d'Orsay. In the first place, the understanding between Rome and London seems to the French to put them between the jaws of the nutcracker. The Italian treaty with Rumania, as we pointed out last week, is regarded in Paris as another, and painfully successful, attempt to break up the solidarity of the Little En-

tente, which has heretofore remained within the circle of French influence. The Italo-Spanish agreement is looked upon as a menace to France's lines of communication across the Mediterranean to her possessions in North Africa. Moreover, it suggests possible Spanish support for Italian ambitions in that region, to be satisfied at the expense of the French. Spain has long been dissatisfied at the French assumption of leadership in the internationalized zone in Tangier. Italy, as everyone knows, looks with longing eyes at Tunisia. She already has more citizens there than the French themselves—the numbers stand 89,000 and 71,000—and while the French are increasing more rapidly than are the Italians, theirs is a highly artificial growth, gained by offering French citizenship to natives of the region, and to Maltese, on attractive terms.

ITALY is still obsessed with the fallacious doctrine that she must have colonies in Africa or the Near East in order to relieve over-population by sending out emigrants. Unless she can find some outlet elsewhere (as she has done to a limited extent through the Albanian treaty) the North African situation is certain to lead to trouble. All in all, the European outlook is about as gloomy at the moment as it could very well be. You could hardly ask a more ironic background for the discussions of disarmament which still proceed, in an atmosphere of increasing futility, at Geneva.

HARRY F. SINCLAIR has been found guilty of contempt of the United States Senate, because of his refusal to answer questions put to him by Senator Walsh on behalf of the committee investigating the oil scandals. He will appeal his case and, if necessary, will carry it through to the Supreme Court, so that the final outcome will probably not be known for a year or more. The recent decision in the Mal Daugherty case makes it unlikely that Mr. Sinclair's appeal from the adverse verdict will be sustained. In any event, the present verdict is important, not only in itself, but because it is likely to be followed by similar action against others who have treated Senate committees in the same cavalier fashion. Samuel Insull, Chicago utilities magnate, Daniel Schuyler, his attorney, and Thomas W. Cunningham, Pennsylvania Republican politician, all refused to answer questions put to them by the Reed Committee. There is now every prospect that as soon as the next session of Congress meets, these gentlemen will also be indicted and tried.

AS April 1 approaches, nobody seems to be much worried about the possibility of a coal strike in the bituminous fields. A few years ago, a soft coal strike was a matter of national moment; its approach occupied the attention of politicians, newspaper men and industrialists; it was front-page news for weeks at a time. But under the reactionary leadership of John L. Lewis, the United Mine

Workers have lost so much territory that a strike will probably have little effect on the consumer, except perhaps to boost the price somewhat. Stocks of coal are now so heavy and the production of non-union mines is so large that, as a matter of fact, coal prices will probably fall if there is no strike; the non-union operators might well subsidize it. Those who look upon unions as unmitigated nuisances will, of course, take satisfaction in this situation; but the truth is that the ills of the industry, especially as they affect the miners, are further from solution than ever. What has happened is merely that the miners have lost the power to make an effective protest. We believe and hope that this loss is only temporary, but we are fearful that it will continue as long as leaders with no more vision and ability than Mr. Lewis are available. With political chicanery and strong-arm methods he has been able to retain control of the union, but his talents have not been sufficient—if indeed they have been energetically applied—to enable the union to retain as much control of the industry as it formerly had. There is still a bare chance that through a spontaneous revolt of the unorganized the union may be able to extend its influence by a strike. If this happens, Mr. Lewis will have his last opportunity to redeem his disastrous presidency.

PREMIER Mackenzie King of Canada has made a new proposal for reciprocity with the United States. In the course of a discussion of another subject, a few days ago, he suggested that Canada would welcome such a proposal, in regard to "natural products." The New Republic believes that reciprocity is thoroughly desirable. It is unlikely that American farmers would find their price levels lowered to any serious degree because of it, since the United States already produces an export surplus of practically every product which might be imported from Canada. In the case of wheat, which already comes across the border in large quantities, much of the importing is done by the farmers themselves, for seed purposes. Despite the advantages of reciprocity, however, there is no doubt that it is politically impossible. Americans still remember that when the plan was proposed by President Taft, it was rejected by Canada, though the offer of the United States stood open for ten years, until withdrawn by the tariff law of 1922. The American farmers are in a mood to refuse this or any similar proposal; and Mr. Coolidge and his friends are still sufficiently devoted to the shibboleth of high tariff—despite Wall Street's waning affection for that doctrine—to make them decline to give the idea any support.

THE administration Republicans continue their desperate attempts to prevent any real investigation of the methods by which Vare was elected Senator from Pennsylvania. His co-worker, Senator David Reed, was the first to immolate himself in this

cause. As everyone knows, his filibuster in the closing hours of the Sixty-ninth Congress was intended to prevent any further activities of the investigating committee headed by Senator James A. Reed, of Missouri. It prevented the passage of much badly-needed legislation, including the urgent deficiency bill, with an appropriation of nearly a hundred million dollars. Lack of these funds will seriously embarrass several government departments during the next few months. We should like to believe that the disgraceful exhibition of the Pennsylvania Senator had sufficiently outraged the public to put an end to his political career; but he did his job for the machine, and machine support is all you need, in Pennsylvania.

SENATOR REED of Missouri, consulting legal authorities after Congress had adjourned, was given the opinion that since the Senate is a "continuing body," his committee was empowered to go on with its operations. The immediately important step is to obtain possession of the ballot boxes in the counties where the worst irregularities took place—these including Luzerne, Lackawanna, Delaware, Schuylkill, Philadelphia and Allegheny. To cover the expense of taking over the ballot boxes in the first four of these counties, \$1,000 was asked of Senator Keyes, Chairman of the Senate Audit and Control Committee. Keyes did his bit to help keep the rottenness of the Vare election concealed, by refusing the money. Thereupon the members of the Reed committee obtained the thousand dollars from private sources, and asked David S. Barry, Sergeant-at-Arms of the Senate, to go and get the ballot boxes. Barry refused to do so, on "conscientious grounds." The Reed committee, undaunted, requested its special attorney, Mr. J. C. South, to act as its representative. It is expected that the Pennsylvania election officials, who are, of course, hand-in-glove with the Vare gang, will refuse to turn the ballot boxes over to Mr. South, and the question will be thrown into the courts.

THE importance of the contest is plain to the Republican politicians, if not to the citizenry at large. The seats of Vare and Smith are necessary if the administration is to retain even nominal control of the Senate in the next session. But behind this, there is a weighty principle involved. The Coolidge régime is dominated by, and dedicated to, big business, to an extent never witnessed in the past. Its Secretary of the Treasury, one of the three richest men in the United States, is himself a dominant figure in the political machine which is trying to put Vare into the Senate. The notion that these praiseworthy efforts to keep the upper house of Congress a home for the wealthy and the little friends of the wealthy can be checkmated by the "muckraking" activities of a man like Reed of Missouri, fills them with abhorrence. They are too shrewd to propose that there shall be no investiga-

tion at all of the election frauds. All they want is a postponement until some time after next December, and a perfunctory inquiry by the Republican-controlled Committee on Elections. Between now and then, of course, evidence can be destroyed, important witnesses will "disappear," and preparations made for Vare to be whitewashed gloriously, as Gould of Maine was whitewashed a few weeks ago. Then our good President need not be embarrassed by a hostile majority in the upper house. With such important results at stake, it is no wonder that a Keyes, a David Reed, a Barry, can be found to obstruct the work of the Senate investigation committee.

Secretary Mellon vs. the Professors

THE dispute between Secretary Mellon and the embattled Columbia and Princeton professors about the status of the war debts from the European Allies to the United States will not, we are afraid, do much to clear up the question for American public opinion. It will not help their fellow countrymen to decide for sound reasons whether and how the existing and the proposed contracts should be revised. The two parties to the controversy differ so radically that their differences need to be explained rather than justified. They are miles apart in their conclusions and in the assumptions on which their conclusions are based. Yet they are so much preoccupied by the vindication of their contentions that they do not even try to get behind and explore their differences for the benefit of an impartial spectator. It may be worth while, consequently, to trace the contending policies to their sources, and to consider whether such a journey will throw any light on the merits of the dispute.

Secretary Mellon's assumptions are derived from the law under which the Debt Commission acted. From this point of view, the debts are debts. They are, it is admitted, debts which were contracted in exceptional circumstances, a fact which justifies some scaling down of the face value, but they remain valid obligations, which the debtor should redeem up to the limit of his ability. The Commission investigated exhaustively the ability of the several debtors to pay, and adjusted the proposed rate of payment to the results of these inquiries. Mr. Mellon unequivocally endorses the actual and the proposed settlements, and he is intolerant of any proposal to cancel or revise them. In fact, like a poor sportsman, he tries to disqualify his opponents. He chides them for their temerity in daring to question the decisions of an official board on which Congress had conferred full power and responsibility, and which had performed its duty conscientiously and considerately.

From the point of view of the professors, this kind of apologetic is irrelevant. They repudiate the assumptions on which Congress legislated and the Commission acted. The debts are, no doubt, legal promises to pay, but the obligations which they define are not morally valid. In France, Italy and Great Britain, the prevailing opinion classifies these supposed loans as gifts which, in the exigencies of the War, the United States should have contributed to the success of the common cause. They did not create an obligation on the part of the recipient of the goods. They merely satisfied an obligation which the alleged creditor, when it entered the War, had assumed toward its European associates. The professors, consequently, do not care whether the Debt Commission performed its duties intelligently and conscientiously. They question its conception of its duty. France, England, Italy and Belgium should not be asked to pay as much as they are able to pay. They should be released from the legal obligation to pay anything at all.

It is entirely possible, however, to sympathize with the proposal of the professors to revise the settlements, but to disagree with both their premises and their conclusion. The debts are just as morally valid as are the other inter-Allied obligations which were incurred during the War. The European Allies in their financial relations one with another never admitted the existence of any obligation to place their resources at one another's disposal without charging for what they gave and paying in some form for what they received. At the time when the goods were purchased and the notes given, both parties assumed them to constitute a perfectly valid debt. The French government expressly repudiated, in 1917, the idea that it would receive any help as a gift, and as late as March, 1919, the French High Commissioner in this country was instructed by his own government to deny the public statements that France proposed to pool the war debts. After this clear acknowledgment of a moral liability, France borrowed an additional \$690,000,000 from the United States. No doubt all promises to pay which were uttered during the excitements, the fears, the compulsions and the distractions of the War should not be taken as seriously as promises which are uttered in more normal circumstances, but morally to repudiate them, as so many Englishmen and Frenchmen are now doing, and as the professors insist they are entitled to do, is, so far as we can see, merely a convenient after-thought.

The idea that the United States and the European Allies were fighting for a common cause which was sufficiently sacred and stupendous to suspend the ordinary rules which govern contractual relations between independent states is wholly unrealistic. The common cause was, of course, the common desire to win a victory over the Central Powers, and its existence induced the European Allies to sign a treaty which forbade any one of them to negotiate a separate peace. But it did not prevent

them from negotiating treaties with one another which provided for their separate interests, and when they extended help to one another in supplies, they did not waive compensation. The United States, moreover, always occupied and claimed a special position. It did not join the anti-German alliance. It never promised not to negotiate a separate peace. It never signed a political agreement with its associates. Through its Presidential mouthpiece, it publicly proclaimed the purposes for which it wished to fight. These purposes, in certain instances, conflicted with the changes in the map which were called for by the separate treaties among the Allies. The Allied statesmen ignored the conflict. They knew perfectly well that if they searched too eagerly and too frankly for a positive cause, which they shared in common, they might not be able to find one. During the fighting, they were quite content to confine the common cause to the dealing of a knockout blow, but after the Armistice, they were painfully surprised at the success of their propaganda in convincing American public opinion.

The agitation for a revision of the debt settlements, based on the assumption that the money should have been given rather than loaned, will not make any headway with American public opinion. American sense of fair play will never understand why the purchases of France and Great Britain in the United States were the kind of contributions to a common cause for which the purchasers were under no moral obligation to pay, while the purchases of the United States in Great Britain and France, amounting to over \$4,000,000,000, were the kind of contributions to a common cause which the purchaser paid and ought to have paid in full. Of course the actual difference between the two cases was not a difference in moral indebtedness but in practical ability to pay. The United States paid in cash because it was able to pay in cash. France, England and Italy, being unable to pay in cash, gave their notes. Being still either unwilling or unable to pay those notes now, they are merely trying to justify their unwillingness by pretending that the obligation is not morally valid.

The New Republic agrees, consequently, with the premise of Mr. Mellon's argument that the debts were debts for which, in some form or other, the United States was entitled to exact a quid pro quo. It agrees, also, that if a quid pro quo is to be exacted, the debtor's ability to pay should be carefully considered in estimating the kind and amount of the payment. The Debt Commission has gone astray, not in proposing and acting on this principle, but in proposing it and then not acting on it. In the case of two such important creditors as Italy and France, neither the Commission nor anyone else knows how much they can pay. The actual contract with Italy and the proposed contract with France are mere guesses. They call for sacrifices in the future which the French and Italian nations probably cannot, and certainly do not intend to make. It looks, super-

ficially, most considerate on the part of the Debt Commission to scale these obligations down to 45 or 25 percent of their face value, but even after the scaling down has taken place, they both are required to pay from \$50,000,000 a year to \$125,000,000 over a period of forty years, which begins twenty-five years from now. It is absurd. No wonder Mussolini signs with a cynical smile on his face, and France refuses to sign.

The negotiation of contracts of this kind, with any expectation that they are good, is sheer self-deception on the part of the American government, and it is the kind of self-deception which is peculiarly baleful in its effects. For, while the American nation will not eventually collect the money, its persistence in demanding it compromises the finances and credit of France and Italy, provides them with a valid excuse for refusing to reduce their demands on Germany, and so retards indefinitely European financial and social recovery. The Debt Commission is gravely at fault, not for following its instructions in trying to collect the debts, but for failing to recognize and inform Congress that the kind of contracts which it was obliged, under its instructions, to negotiate with France and Italy are not, and cannot be, worth anything like their face value. As soon as the American public understands how comparatively worthless and how mischievous these contracts are, it will be prepared to consider whether it should not consider a quid pro quo for its notes which will be of more value than the money which it seeks to collect.

There is only one form which the alternative payments can take, and it is a form which is certainly related to the cause, common or not, for which, according to Mr. Wilson, the United States was fighting the War and lending the money: viz., the pacification of Europe. The American government can propose to modify its claims on its former associates, provided they will modify analogous international claims of their own which are equally certain to make trouble. We refer, of course, to German reparations. This may seem to be a wholly impracticable alternative; and it is true that, at present, neither Congress nor American public opinion would seriously consider such disinterested compensation. But once they are permitted to learn the facts, they will be willing, and will be forced, to consider it. The ability of France, Italy and Great Britain to pay depends on Germany's ability to pay, and Germany's ability to pay is still grossly exaggerated in public, and does something to justify the estimates of the Debt Commission. Hitherto she has succeeded in meeting her obligations under the Dawes plan, but after another year, the annual payments will amount to over \$600,000,000, and all economists know that she cannot continue to meet them out of her own resources. She will find herself before long in voluntary or involuntary default; and this default will raise the whole question of the liquidation of the war liabilities and future Euro-

pean peace. It will be necessary to call an international conference to deal with the impossible liabilities of Germany under the Versailles Treaty, and the United States should be represented in that conference. Its proceedings will reveal to American public opinion how good their claims really are. Germany, it will be admitted, cannot pay more than a certain amount to France and Italy. Consequently, France and Italy cannot pay more than a certain amount to the United States. Why not, then, let up on France, Italy and England, provided they will let up on Germany? Congress, in view of the huge American stake in European recovery, could surely agree to a proposal which would impose sacrifices on all in the interest of a general appeasement.

Such, at all events, is the one chance of converting the war debts from a bone of contention into an agency of peace. Yet it ceases to be a chance if the American government admits, as the professors demand, that its claims are not morally valid. For if the claims are not valid, the United States has no right to enter the conference and ask for a quid pro quo of any kind. It would leave the European Allies, after having been relieved of their debt to America, free to collect all they could from Germany and, with the exception of Great Britain, they have not yet betrayed any willingness to reduce those claims to moderate and possible figures. The Allies would somehow have managed to have it both ways—to keep their legal right to collect an indemnity from their enemy, Germany, and to deny the right of their friend, the United States, to claim compensation for its expenses on their behalf. Those Americans who hope that the influence of their country can still be used to help European pacification are defeating their own purpose by insisting on the moral invalidity of the war debts. If they are morally invalid, the common cause which bound the United States to the European Allies perished when victory was won. No opportunity or pretext would remain for keeping alive the political motives which, according to Mr. Wilson, induced the American nation to enter the War.

A Substitute for Regulation

THE controversy between Governor Smith of New York, who wants the hydro-electric projects on the St. Lawrence River and the Niagara developed by the state, and the Republican machine in the legislature, which wants them developed by the private utility companies, assumes a new and interesting phase in the Governor's recent message. This phase is worth noting in some detail because of its bearing on the national power problem.

Mr. Smith's plan has been to create a water-power authority, which, as a corporation owned by the state, would have power to issue bonds, construct the plants, and sell the current at the switchboard to distributing agencies. The Republican

and private-utility plan has been to lease the water rights to private companies, who would then proceed to build the plants. The terms of the lease were supposed to protect the public as to the valuation to be placed on the plants, and the right of recapturing them after a term of fifty years.

In behalf of the Governor's plan, it has been argued that, under public development, the base upon which a return must be earned would automatically be no larger than the actual cost of the project. This return would be no greater than would be necessary to pay the interest on the bonds, and provide for amortization of the investment. Under private development, the valuation would be almost certain to include other elements than the actual cost of the investment. The rate of return would probably be larger, while amortization probably would not take place. The lease might not prove to be binding in all its details, as has been the case with other long-term contracts made between the state and private companies. It would be likely to contain loopholes. And, at the end of the period, the state might find it extremely difficult to recapture the property. If the project were publicly developed, on the other hand, it could easily be turned over to private hands at any time when the state tired of its undertaking. These arguments have been answered by the usual platitudes about socialism and the tradition of private enterprise in the United States, and also by the assertion that graft and inefficiency would raise the cost, under public development.

Ever since the legislature convened, the Republican leaders and the Governor have been conferring to see if a way out of the impasse could be found. The final result is disagreement. The Republicans now propose an investigating commission to report on the relative desirability of public and private ownership. The Governor proposes a commission to investigate the feasibility of a state water-power authority. The difference between these two proposals, while not apparent on the surface, is great. The Republican commission would not be asked to pass judgment on a definite project. It would simply give rise to the ancient controversy between the theoretical advocates of socialism and private enterprise. It would settle nothing, and its report, as the Governor well says, "is bound to be a textbook with a record of debates that no one will read." On the other hand, a commission to investigate the feasibility of a state water-power authority could deal with a concrete proposal in its relation to a concrete situation. In examining the feasibility of that proposal, it would be bound to discuss the facts concerning it, on the basis of which a definite comparison could be made with any proposal for leasing which the Republicans and the utilities might advance.

If the Republicans are not willing to have the searchlight played on the Governor's project in this way, he proposes that a referendum be held, in the fall election, to find out whether the people favor

public development or not. This is, of course, a shrewd political manœuvre. By rejecting it, as they have, the Republicans place themselves in the position of declining to consult the citizens' desire in the matter, and admitting, by inference, that the vote would be against them. The manœuvre is more than good politics, however. The objection that the voters are not competent to decide technical questions is beside the point. If a debate is to be carried on concerning the general desirability of a general policy, the place to do it, in a democratic government, is before the forum of the voters. Other than technical considerations would have a proper place in such a debate. They would concern the growing power and the menace of the holding company interests which contributed large sums toward the election of a former utility commissioner as Senator from Illinois, and remained in contempt of the Senate investigating committee by refusing to answer questions concerning these contributions, which by a filibuster refused to allow a Senate majority to vote for the administration bill for the development of Boulder Dam, or to make any disposition of Muscle Shoals. They would concern the activities of the Republican majority in the New York legislature favorable to a power merger, a leading officer of which is the former Republican leader of that legislature. After a ventilation of such matters, if a majority of the voters favored public development, the next step would be a technical investigation of its feasibility, such as the Governor has already proposed.

Governor Smith's plan for a power authority is, moreover, given further definiteness in his recent message. He now proposes that the state, as seller of the power, make contracts with the private distributing companies as to its resale price, which would provide a check such as, we have learned, cannot be expected from public regulation under present conditions. Such sale contracts would presumably be for short terms, and would not be open to the same dangers as a long-term lease of power rights. They would give the state positive and final control. They would guard against the dangers to regulation which arise from two recent decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States—that concerning valuation, in the Indianapolis water case, and that concerning the transmission of power over state lines, in the Rhode Island case.

The Indianapolis water case, which we have previously discussed at length, directs that the valuation, on which the rate is supposed to render a "fair return," be not the "prudent investment" or actual cost of construction, but the cost of reproduction at present spot prices, plus an intangible "going value." On the basis of this legal doctrine, the holding companies can buy out local concerns at a large profit to their builders and owners, recapitalize them at a much higher value, sell enough securities to the public to pay the purchase price plus a profit to the promoter, and retain control through concentrated stock-ownership, for which the promoters have paid

little or nothing. The public must then pay for these private profits in rates—as long as regulation is the only weapon in the arsenal of the consumer. The promoters are safeguarded against a possible reduction in value which might result from falling prices, because they have already made their profit, by the sale of securities to the public. But a contract made between a publicly owned generating company and the utilities might either specify the retail prices, or bind the company to a more conservative method of valuation, or both. It could thus protect both the consumer and the investor.

According to the decision in the Rhode Island case, the utilities commission in one state has no authority over the rates paid for electricity produced in another state and carried over the border. Such transmission is interstate commerce, and is therefore under the authority of the federal government, which has yet exercised no authority in the matter. With long-distance transmission and the degree of interconnection which is now coming into being, there is thus left a wide and important gap in regulation. But there would apparently be nothing to prevent a state-owned plant from making a contract with a distributing company in another state in order to control the price. Reciprocity among the states would lead to the beneficial exercise of this power. Contracts between the state and the private companies have already been suggested by public authorities, in both Pennsylvania and Massachusetts, as a method of overcoming the breakdown of regulation within the state boundaries. In the case of a state which actually produced power, such contracts could easily be extended to cover interstate business.

As popular understanding of the power issue grows, the New York Republicans may find that they have grasped the wrong end of a very sharp stick. Governor Smith's courageous seizure of this issue, and his resourceful manner of developing it, is statesmanship of a high order. If he can win, not only will he gain an inestimable benefit for the citizens of the state, but he will be the first public representative in the United States to insert an effective curb in the mouth of the young and voracious utilities monster.

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FOREIGN, SIX DOLLARS; THREE MONTHS' TRIAL, ONE DOLLAR

Mexico and the United States

HISTORY offers few sharper and more ironic contrasts than the comparative chronicles of the neighboring peoples of Mexico and the United States. Their stories, as we know them, both begin with the discovery by Europeans of a new continent which furnishes the scenery, the atmosphere, the lighting and the properties for the two dramas. They are both occupied, for two hundred years, almost exclusively with the exploration and the conquest of the new country, its partial settlement by Europeans, and with the relation between the pioneer colonies and the mother country. These American communities exhibited, from the start, distinctive traits which were born of the peculiarities of their physical surroundings in the new world. The inhabitants of Europe had for centuries been cramped. There was not enough of anything to go around. What one man took, another lacked. The wealth, the power and the opportunities were concentrated in a few hands. In the new world, there existed an abundance for all, or the possibility of it. There were more air, more light and more space in America. Its natural resources were a free and magnificent gift which the lavish earth bestowed upon its inhabitants and which, by virtue of steadily improving technical methods, might supply them with the means to create a more humane society.

The people of the United States reaped the full advantage of their geographical privileges. By the time of the Revolution they were fully aware of the debt. They cultivated almost to the point of obsession a geographical national consciousness. They attributed their well-being, when it came, to their separation from Europe and to the natural advantages of their habitation in a new world. They gloried in their newer-worldliness. It was and is associated in their minds with the new era of scientific discovery and with the improved technology which has increased man's control over nature. The crossing of successive generations of Europeans to America, the energy with which they cleared and plowed the land, laid out means of communication, built cities and dwellings, founded prosperous and self-governing communities and federated these communities into a powerful and prosperous nation—these successes have persuaded them that they are destined for great things. They belonged, as they thought, to an age, to a society and to a land in which, for the first time, human beings had equipped themselves to control beneficially their own destinies. They considered themselves deserving, no doubt, but they also considered themselves peculiarly fortunate in their natural inheritance.

The Mexicans, on the other hand, although they share this new world with the people of the United

States, have never enjoyed similar advantages or cherished similar hopes. Their land contains, it is true, rich natural resources. It can produce a prodigious variety of grains, fibres, fruits and minerals, and when properly watered and cultivated, it is capable of supporting in well-being a much denser population than has ever lived on its products. If its natural resources had been developed for the general benefit, the soil of Mexico might have earned the gratitude of the Mexican people, just as the soil of this country has earned the gratitude of its inhabitants. But unfortunately the society which emerged in Mexico after the conquest was not leavened by the opportunities of its natural environment. Men were conquered, not nature. The conquerors imposed the institutions, the economics, the extravagances and the superstitions of old Spain upon the population of the new land. They deprived the Mexican people of any share in the ownership or the products of the soil. These differences explain the sharp contrast between the stories of the two peoples, the gross disparity between their levels of economic prosperity and the radical divergence between their social, political and cultural outlooks.

II

As compared to the lands north of the Rio Grande, Mexico was at the time of the conquest a well populated country, inhabited by an organized, a stable and a technically advanced society. It was a society which, unfortunately for the Mexicans, had already tapped the natural resources of the country and revealed their abundance and the profits of a predatory appropriation. The task of the Spaniards differed, consequently, from that of the northern pioneers. In the north, the immigrants did their own work and earned their reward. But in the south, the Spaniards seized the land and subjugated its inhabitants. They used this servile labor to cultivate its fields and work its mines, and they divided the product to suit themselves. The Indian laborers received only the absolute minimum of shelter and subsistence. The Spaniards took the rest. The surplus, which was very large and which consisted of raw agricultural or mineral products, was dissipated or sent out of the country. There was little accumulation of capital, and no encouragement of commercial enterprise or technical skill. The resident Spaniards were either the agents or the imitators of absentee owners. It was their business to work the Mexican Indians to the limit, to provide against a successful rebellion, and to reserve for Spaniards in Spain or in America the products of Mexican labor on Mexican soil. The freedom, the elasticity and the

stimulus which their habitation of a new world conferred on the people of the United States never knocked on the door of the people of Mexico.

The Mexicans have never enjoyed a fair chance of developing their latent possibilities. Racial dogmatists may question the existence of such capabilities, and they can muster some plausible arguments in favor of this opinion. For one, the native Mexicans were probably not, at the time of the conquest, capable of self-assertion. They must have been accustomed, before the conquest, to a servile relationship to their chiefs. If not, they would have resisted more desperately than they actually did their subsequent economic exploitation by the Spaniard. In this sense, they were stamped for exploitation by somebody. But they have not been permanently content to accept it. During the centuries of Spanish rule, they learned to counter-assert themselves somewhat. They have exhibited, according to their well informed friends, many definite, stubborn and valuable qualities which they have never been allowed freely to express. No one can tell what they can do for themselves until they are permanently treated as something more than beasts of burden. They promise to become not only better citizens, craftsmen, technicians and business men than they are today, but also better artists in plastic expression and in life.

At the time of the conquest, they had built up a society of their own which combined some advances towards civilization with many remnants of barbarism. Like other primitive people, they expressed themselves more successfully in the arts and in religion than in politics. They designed the patterns and wove the fabric of their social organization chiefly under the promptings of religious awe and fear; and to this day they are better prepared psychologically to take part in a religious fellowship than in a political or economic community. The Spaniards were peculiarly well equipped to exploit the Indian trait. They, like the citizens of the United States or Great Britain of today, were eager to assume the white man's burden, but their way of benefiting the Indian was not to promote his physical welfare. They proposed to convert him to Catholicism and instruct him in the faith, the imagery, the ritual and the sacraments of the Roman Church. The Indian took kindly to certain aspects of Catholicism. Its mechanism of worship, of discipline, of consolation and adoration provided him with a positive compensation for the privations of his life. But he came to associate the Catholic Church with the political and economic system of which he was the victim; and he never allowed his allegiance to the Christian God and the Catholic saints to extinguish a lingering, furtive loyalty to his heathen deities. He forced the hierarchy in Mexico to overlook and even to recognize forms of worship which concealed an essentially pagan body of emotions, habits and ideas behind a garment of Catholicism.

Thus the civilization of the Mexican Indian developed many contrasts to that of the pioneer immigrant to the northern colonies. The pioneer was usually a European Protestant, who took advantage of his migration to throw off the economic, social and political shackles of his forbears. He worshiped his own gods. He founded and operated his own governments. He appropriated the resources of the new continent and kept their proceeds for himself. He became, in his own eyes, the typical man of the modern world, who was called to found a society of laborious, prosperous and individualist freemen. His neighbor, the Mexican Indian, was not allowed to do anything for himself. His rulers copied in America the worst form of Asiatic or European economic exploitation. His culture and religion were ruthlessly imposed upon him from abroad. He never tasted of the good living which lay dormant in the soil of his native land. The Spaniard robbed him of everything which he might call his own. He received nothing in return except a little food and shelter and, as a sufficient compensation, an extravagant supply of doubtful religious salvation. The new world, which looked to the settlers of the United States like the Promised Land, was envisaged in his mind as the lovely but mournful scenery of the drama of his own crucifixion.

III

The revolutions which separated the United States from Great Britain, and Mexico from Spain, did not, until recently, bring about any change in the comparative circumstances and the psychology of the two peoples. The individualist pioneers of the north celebrated their independence by consciously cultivating their patriotic newer-worldliness. They arranged to divide up and develop more quickly their natural resources, to increase the acreage of the national domain, to expand industry and domestic commerce and to hurry up the accumulation of capital. Their rôle, as they saw it, was to acquire wealth rapidly by their own efforts and to distribute it widely. They expected by these means to break all previous records in creating better values for individuals and social life. Their anti-types, the Mexican Indians, continued to be as much dispossessed and subjugated after the Revolution of 1810 as before. They had fought, for the most part, on the side of the rebels, in a vague dumb hope of relieving themselves from oppression and of improving their social condition, but the victory of the insurrection did them little good. Mexican Spaniards carried on the congenial work of exploitation. It continued to be the function of the Indian to extract products from the soil for the benefit of its owners. Their reward was postponed to another world. The ability to exploit their labor remained the major premise of the political, economic and social system of the

country. The freedom which they had won by revolution was only the freedom to incorporate revolution into the Mexican scheme of government.

Nevertheless, the subsequent century or more of the government by dictatorship and revolution has not been a total loss. The peon has exercised his right to rebel incessantly and not unprofitably. He has not known how to name his own rulers, but if they did not satisfy him, if they proved callous to his grievances, he could on occasions force them to quit. Although he could not make a government which consulted his interests, he could unmake the governments which did not consult them. The prolonged anarchy and disorder were his helpless retort to the facts of his continued destitution and oppression. They were the equivalent to an angry stubborn vote of no-confidence in society and government. In this sense, the Mexican Indian has not, since 1810, consented to his own exploitation. He has welcomed revolution rather than submit patiently to a system which associated order with his complete deprivation of economic and cultural opportunities.

An increasing number of Mexicans have, since the Revolution of 1810, come to attach a moral to the political confusion of the last hundred years. A Mexican government which is to endure must, it seems, convince the peons of its will and its ability to improve their economic and social position. Otherwise, they will in sufficient numbers assist or connive at rebellion against it and shake it down. In spite of the fact, consequently, that many Mexican peons are accustomed to disorder and will take the field with a light heart against any government, there may be a way of breaking up the revolutionary habit. The government which labors to give to the Mexican peon a better chance of well-being than he has enjoyed in the past can probably count upon the support of a sufficient majority of the people. For he will then begin to associate law and order with hope and deliverance instead of with oppression and despair.

This assumption is now being tested. A Mexican government is, for the first time, trying out ways and means of improving the life of the peon. Juarez, many years ago, started a similar experiment, but circumstances were unfavorable. Nevertheless, he threw out the French, challenged the Church which had called Maximilian in, stimulated national feeling and reformed Mexican constitutional law. He created an attitude of expectant confidence in the Mexican people which enabled his successor, Porfirio Diaz, to survive for thirty years. As usual, the confidence was misplaced and abused, with the result that another revolutionary period began in 1910. This revolution was more radical. It destroyed the power of the land-holders and the financiers who had plundered the nation during the presidency of Diaz. In fact, it almost exterminated the class which had ruled Mexico since 1810, and, by so doing, it created a vacancy

in the board of governors which had to be filled. A nationalist party of mixed composition, but closely associated with the trades-unions and the army, occupied the vacant place; and it now rules Mexico very much as the Fascists rule Italy and the Communists Russia. It is, if you please, a party dictatorship, which is willing to maintain itself in power by force, but it is legal, intelligent and benevolent. It is trying out an enlightened program of reconstruction. Its ability to remain in power does not depend merely upon the support of the army and the submission of the people. It depends more on its own cohesion and on the nature and success of its policy. If it succeeds in improving the condition of the peon, in enlarging his opportunities and in multiplying his activities, it will soon build up a vested popular interest in its survival, which may enable it to endure for many years.

The people of the United States do not sufficiently realize that they are now living across the line from a new Mexico. The Mexican nation is, for the first time, practising self-government. Its form of self-government does not as yet involve the free and honest expression of the popular will in elections, but it is, in its own way, expressly responsible to the Mexican people. It has promised to provide for them a measurable quantity of social welfare and to stand or fall by the result. It differs from all previous governments in Mexico in that it is trying to stimulate the ambition, diversify the opportunities and enlarge the outlook of the Mexican Indian. Its practical program is thoroughly enlightened and has already achieved a small measure of success and popular approval. There is taking place in Mexico something in the nature of a national renaissance. Its spokesmen hope to build up a Mexican culture and society which is based, not upon the exploitation of the peon, but upon his deliverance and education.

IV

The Mexicans, although they have begun to escape the yoke of their domestic oppressors, are not yet secure in their independence and good order. There is one obstacle to their security and success over which they can exercise little control. Their future depends upon friendship, toleration and assistance from the United States, and there is grave doubt whether they will ever get the help of the right kind, and in sufficient quantities. The threat of interference and enmity from the United States is the more serious because it derives most of its force from economic rather than political motives. Mexico is not, in my opinion, exposed to a deliberate attack from this country, undertaken frankly for the purpose of despoiling or conquering her. There is a small group of frank, ruthless imperialists, with *Liberty Magazine* and the *Chicago Tribune* as its trumpets, but at present

its influence is almost negligible. There are more people in the United States today who would be outraged by a policy of spoliation, and who are alert and resolute to prevent it, than ever before in our history as a nation. They are, at least for the present, sufficiently numerous and powerful to protect Mexico against any frankly predatory invasion from the north. It is the overwhelming economic preponderance of the United States and the proximity of the two countries which creates the real danger. Mexico offers the richest and most convenient of all opportunities outside of this country for the investment of American capital. The probability is that, if such capital continues to flow in large quantities into Mexico, its owners will seek protection for it by a disguised form of extra-territoriality. They will demand, south of the Rio Grande, the same freedom of movement and the same security which they receive from their own government.

The two peoples of Mexico and the United States are now only beginning to feel the full effects of the radical differences in national tradition, make-up and psychology which have been brought about by their sharply contrasted histories. The business men of the United States have converted their bountiful new world into a colossal reservoir of mechanical energy and of capital. This wealth and this ability to generate and to canalize energy can no longer be employed at home as profitably as its owners and managers would like. Europe will continue to absorb some share of the surplus, but her power of absorption is limited by her inability to pay the interest on her existing debts to this country except by increasing them. A nationalized China, if it ever comes about, will need to borrow large sums, but it will probably not be able for some time to put up sufficiently satisfactory security. Latin America, but particularly Mexico, will offer the most convenient, the most manageable and the most profitable field of employment for the accumulated capital of the people of the United States. Mexico is still enormously rich in undeveloped natural resources and in opportunities for the increased employment of mechanical energy. Its citizens possess little or no capital of their own. Yet if they are to have a national revival, they will need money for all manner of purposes: to build roads, refineries, factories, power-houses, irrigation works, houses and the like. The Mexicans cannot borrow this capital in sufficient quantities from anywhere except the United States. Yet it is doubtful whether they can either borrow or refuse to borrow from the United States without getting into trouble.

If capital from the United States continues to be exported to Mexico in very large quantities, the transaction will tend to perpetuate the kind of exploitation from which the Mexican peon has suffered for so many centuries. The interest on the loans will have to be paid by the export of goods, and the only goods which Mexico can export in

sufficient quantities at present are raw or crude products which, for the most part, cannot be replaced. The capital will, consequently, drift not into factories but into mines and the like, which employ relatively unskilled labor at low wages. Mexico's nearness to such a gigantic workshop as the United States tends to convert her automatically into an economic satellite of the major body. The only way in which the Mexicans can build up an independent national economy is to limit and condition the invasion of capital from the north. They can allow it to enter only on terms which will safeguard Mexico from being forced indefinitely to furnish raw materials for factories in the United States. The present Mexican government is, as a matter of fact, now seeking to do just this thing. Its land and petroleum laws, its refusal to allow aliens to own more than a certain proportion of certain properties, its insistence that the owners of capital invested in Mexico shall rely upon the Mexican courts or administrative officials for redress of grievances, its highly protective tariff and, finally, the tendency of its social legislation to favor the employe rather than the employer—all these aspects of its policy have been devised for the purpose of asserting its economic individuality. The Mexicans prefer to keep out capital from the United States unless it can be employed to build up and independent and well balanced Mexican national economy.

There are, in general, only two policies which the Mexicans can adopt in relation to the imported capital which their country so grievously needs, and both are dangerous. If they allow capital from the United States to enter in large quantities and practically on its own terms, as Porfirio Diaz did, Mexico will remain merely a low economic organism of a special character, which will have to fasten itself like a parasite on American industry. Such a policy would involve, finally, political subordination to the United States. Capital would pour into Mexican mines and oil wells so as to take advantage of the cheaper Mexican labor and the rich Mexican natural deposits, but the product would be exported without being worked up. The exchange would not result in the accumulation of capital and technical skill in Mexico nor in any leveling up in the standard of living. The government would have failed to redeem its pledges to the Mexican workers. It would be engaged in fighting a new revolution. The revolutionists would tend to be anti-United States and probably also anti-capitalist. In the course of time they would certainly commit excesses which would furnish a sufficient excuse for military intervention. Capital from the United States which entered Mexico quickly and in large quantities for the purpose chiefly of extracting raw materials would have to be followed by an army in order to force the Mexican people to submit to the consequences of its investment. The army would have to remain there as long as the capital insisted on having its own way.

Yet the Mexicans cannot limit and condition the

investment of capital in their country without exposing themselves to another peril. Their assertion of economic independence will provoke irritation and enmity in New York and Washington, and will compromise thereby their national security. The business men of the United States will regard the attempt to subordinate the use of their capital to the needs of Mexican national economy as confiscatory and Bolshevistic. They cannot, in general, deny the legal right of Mexico to determine the conditions under which capital is allowed to enter, but if the conditions are, in their opinion, too onerous, they will not be content merely to withhold the capital. They will try to evade or, from their point of view, improve the conditions. They will seize every opportunity to make trouble. They will foment disorder and uncertainty in Mexico, in the hope that it will result in the fall of the present government and the substitution of a more complaisant successor. They will encourage the State Department to seek opportunities of severing diplomatic relations with Mexico and treating it as an outlaw. The effect of such a policy would be to undermine the independence and security of Mexico. A Mexican government can at present obtain official encouragement and support in the United States only by a policy which would destroy its authority in its own country.

In choosing between the two perils, the Mexican leaders have selected the less dangerous and the more self-respecting route. Their country may not in any event succeed in preserving its economic and political independence, but its best chance is to take the risk of moderating and regulating the invasion of capital from the United States. They cannot, even if they would, assimilate too much capital at the present time without fastening on themselves for a prolonged future the privations of their own past. The history, the circumstances, the needs and the psychology of the Mexican people all force them to cultivate national well-being, not by appealing to a foreign capitalism which is indifferent to their national interest, but to a benevolent collectivism. Having been collectively ground down they must be collectively raised up. If their rulers are to create a higher standard of living for their people, they can do it only by encouraging Mexican industry and agriculture and by large expenditures on education. They cannot avoid interfering with the automatic effects of capitalist investment in Mexico and subordinating the different economic activities of the country to the requirements of a general plan of national economic development. They are certain to irritate and offend this country, but they are justified in taking that risk. The investors of the United States have an interest in exporting more capital to Mexico than the Mexicans can afford to pay for and digest. Although the Mexicans should recognize the resulting danger to their own independence, they would be unwise to succumb without resistance. The future of Mexico and of the United States depends upon whether or not the latter will

pursue its present policy, regardless of the welfare of the Mexican people and their right to control their own destiny.

The United States has a palpable interest, of which business men are fully aware, in converting the whole of Mexico and Central America into an economic and political dependency. The execution of this plan would be expensive in many ways, but it does not present any grave military difficulties. The power of the United States is fully adequate to overcome any local opposition. If it refrains, its forbearance will not be due to lack of motive or of power. It will be due to the interference of humane scruples. Such scruples exist and can be cultivated. If the difference between the circumstances and the needs of the two nations and the origin of those differences can be brought home to the American people, they may refuse to convert the consequences of their own good fortune into a sufficient excuse for prolonging the oppression and the privations of the Mexicans.

The cultivation of these scruples should be one of the chief preoccupations of the progressives in the United States. The employment of the power which its pioneers have accumulated by their exploitation of the new world for the purpose of forcing their interests and civilization on their unfortunate and impoverished neighbor would be an unpardonably shabby and callous performance. They cannot appropriate the natural resources of Central America and Mexico without either buying out or subjugating their inhabitants. But if they move in this direction, the effect of their new possessions and opportunities on themselves would be the opposite of the effect of their settlement of the Promised Land. They would be following in the footsteps of Cortez rather than of their own forbears. They would become the creatures rather than the masters of their own magnificent treasure of mechanical energy. Under the influence of their economic imperialism, they would cease to exist as a community whose citizens had hoped to find a moral equivalent for prosperity by promoting liberty, equality and human brotherhood. They would have become merely the remorseless human conveyors of the huge accumulation of energy which they had elicited from the earth. They would be following the example of Spain by reproducing in America the worst consequences of European scarcity and privilege. Instead of pursuing the idea of their forefathers of creating a new world, they would have fallen back on the effort to renew the kind of old world which Europe itself was struggling to abandon.

If the United States finally decides to subordinate the needs and preferences of the Mexican and Central American peoples to the interests of the owners of foreign capital, the progressives in this country will have to look to the repair of their own fences. Thereafter the domination of self-centred business and finance in the affairs of the United States will inexorably become more headstrong, more intoler-

ant and more unscrupulous than it now is. The official propaganda will increasingly affirm that any protest against this imperialism in Mexico, in Central America or in the United States itself is a symptom of an intolerable Bolshevism; and in the shadow of this propaganda, dirty work of all kinds can be carried on with impunity. The progressives, who are defending the right of Mexico to pursue a national policy which, for the time being, is justified in being suspicious and even defiant of the United States, are merely defending their own right to exist. Mexico is their test case. If they cannot safeguard her from the peril to her independence created by the alliance between aggressive capitalism, narrow legalism and racial snobbery in this country, they will themselves in the long run have to submit to treatment as rough and as unfair as that to which the State Department and the oil interests are now subjecting the Mexican government.

HERBERT CROLY.

White Crepe on the Door

(*Old Bowery Ballad*)

My father was unfaithful
and my mother was untrue,
and if you spy this bit of crepe
you'll see what I am too.

Between the life he led her
and the love that she led him,
there's nothing left of what I was
or what I might have been.

And yet my lot's a blessing—
the crepe might have been black—
I died when I was six months old—
I'd never take them back.

Now Stranger when you're passing by
remember if you can:
a man should never marry woman,
woman marry man.

ALFRED KREYMBORG.

Lost Harbor

(*For George Sterling*)

The love of life that captained him could brook
No laggard helm aversive to the gale;
He knew the fleetness of the wind, the look
Of decks aslant under a cloud of sail.
So, when the sea came sucking at the seams;
And mutiny like some dark plague began
Muttering through the turmoil of his dreams,
He sought a harbor where the slow tides ran.

There is a port of no return, where ships
May ride at anchor for a little space.
And then, some starless night, the cable slips,
Leaving an eddy at the mooring place . . .
Gulls, veer no longer. Sailor, rest your oar.
No tangled wreckage will be washed ashore.

LESLIE NELSON JENNINGS.

Spinoza: Prophet of Liberalism

THOSE who have studied Spinoza in his historic setting are not likely to claim for him an opulence of original ideas comparable to that of Leibniz or Kant. As a genuinely humble, non-professional, but devoted seeker for the truth—his type still persists among lowly Jewish artisans—Spinoza never valued ideas for their novelty, and had no hankering to be the founder of a new system of philosophy. The tremendous impression which he has made on the imagination of mankind during the last century and a half is due rather to the singular purity of his light, and to the way in which many traditional ideas (and even their hackneyed expressions) are fused into a pure and coherent whole by the fire of his concentrated intellectual energy, that kindles a lyric ardor for human well-being. In this respect Spinoza greatly resembles Dante. Like Dante, he could well have said: My work is in the field of ethics or practical philosophy. It is to trace the way from human bondage and misery to freedom and happiness; and if I touch on speculative matters, it is because I agree with Aristotle that intellectual vision is essential to the highest human life and that truly practical men must often theorize.

It is because he so well exemplifies the faith that the way to human salvation is through reason and enlightenment that Spinoza may well be considered the philosopher-prophet of liberalism.

If liberals have not always recognized this, their opponents, obscurantists, authoritarians and enemies of enlightenment and scientific method, have amply done so. For since within a few weeks of the publication of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, they have never ceased to pay Spinoza the homage of their inveterate hatred—a hatred based on genuine fear.

The term liberalism is vague enough; but historically it is well identified with the policies which are the offspring of the philosophy of the Enlightenment, a philosophy which in the seventeenth century found congenial support in cosmopolitan Holland, the nursery of Grotius as well as of Spinoza.

As opposed to the policies of fear and suppression, based on the principle that nature is sin and intellect the devil, the policies of liberalism aim to liberate the energies of human nature by the free and fearless use of reason. Liberalism disregards dogmas and rules that hinder the freedom of scientific inquiry and the questioning of all accepted truths. Prophets, priestly hierarchies, sacred books, and sanctified traditions must submit their claims to the court of human reason and experience. In this way mankind is liberated from superstitious fears, such as that of magic, or witchcraft, and from arbitrary and cruel restraints on human happiness. Liberalism in general thus means the opening up of opportunities in all fields of human endeavor, to-

gether with an emphasis on the value of deliberative rather than arbitrary forces in the governance of practical affairs.

The touchstone which enables us to recognize liberalism is the question of toleration. Do you believe in prohibiting the expression of opinions that are contrary to what you hold to be the truth in politics, morals, and religion? If you do, then admirable as you may otherwise be, you are not of the true liberal faith.

The doctrine of toleration involves significant practical and theoretic difficulties. The practical difficulty has never been stated more clearly than by Spinoza. It amounts to this: How can a government allow poisonous and subversive errors or immoral opinions to spread without thereby being derelict in its duty to protect and preserve the community? How can the state maintain its sovereignty without suppressing views hostile to its continued existence? In theoretic terms this amounts to the familiar taunt: How can you have a definite conviction and yet find ground to tolerate views which contradict it?

Spinoza's answer involves the distinction between demonstrated knowledge of necessary relations and ordinary beliefs as to existential issues on which we are only subjectively certain. The rationalist who maintains the ideal of rigorous demonstration is all the more ready to appreciate the fallibility of our ordinary beliefs. Experience confirms this, in showing how often men have been mistaken when they were convinced of having attained the final, absolute truth. Indeed, the history of physical science shows that, by questioning that which seems to us self-evident, our opponents can be of the greatest help in making us see more of the truth.

While our supreme interest in the truth thus forbids the suppression of opinion, the state cannot avoid the duty of regulating conduct in the interest of the common safety. Once the will of the state is expressed in law, it cannot allow variations of opinion or conscience to serve as an excuse for disobedience or rebellion. So emphatic is Spinoza in his insistence on the sovereignty of the state, that he has often been wrongly interpreted as a political absolutist like Hobbes. But Spinoza is a follower not of the Hobbes of our conventional tradition, but of the Hobbes who wrote the *Leviathan*, primarily to exalt the state against the Kingdom of Darkness, i.e., the Roman Church as a temporal power and super-state. Spinoza, like most liberals, undoubtedly shares this view of the necessary autonomy of the state. History has shown this to be a much needed protection, not only against the abuses of clericalism, but also against the anarchic despotism of local potentates, trade guilds, and other effective tyrannies.

But while the state must thus maintain its sovereignty, wisdom dictates that it recognize the inherent limitations of its power. No earthly sovereign can do what he pleases. A government works

only by means of external constraints, generally by the fear of punishment. It cannot compel people to respect and love that for which they have contempt or disgust. Moreover, to make men obey the law is not the supreme end of the state, though it is its principal method. The final end of the state is to make men free to develop their powers; and excessive regulation by a fallible earthly sovereign is likely to defeat that end, and thus do more harm than good. A good illustration of this is to be found in the field of sumptuary legislation. The following words of Spinoza sound peculiarly timely to us today: "Many attempts have been made to frame sumptuary laws. But these attempts have never succeeded in their end. For all laws which can be violated without doing any one an injury are laughed at. Nay, so far are they from doing anything to control the desires and passions of men, that, on the contrary, they direct and incite men's thoughts the more towards those very objects; for we always strive for what is forbidden and desire the things we are not allowed to have. And men of leisure are never deficient in the ingenuity needed to enable them to outwit laws framed to regulate things which cannot be entirely forbidden," etc.

"My conclusion, then, is that those vices which are commonly bred in a state of peace, of which we are here speaking, can never be directly prevented, but only indirectly. That is to say, we can only prevent them by constituting the state in such a way that most men will not indeed live with wisdom (for that cannot be secured simply by law) but will be led by those emotions from which the state will derive most advantage."

More generally still: "He who tries to determine everything by law will foment crime rather than lessen it. Things which cannot be prevented must necessarily be allowed, even though some disadvantages may often arise therefrom. How many evils arise, for instance, from luxury, envy, avarice, drunkenness, and such like things. Yet these must be submitted to, because they cannot be prevented by legal regulations."

All this means that, in politics, as in all other human activities, the way to true peace and freedom leads through the path of wisely cultivated resignation. We must recognize that we are not like God, that there are powers outside of us greater than ourselves, and that absolute perfection is, therefore, denied to us humans in our practical efforts. This also involves, as a necessary corollary, the existence of risks in all human enterprise. It is the open recognition of the element of risk, together with the faith that human energy is worth liberating, that is the key to rational liberalism. If liberalism has not always been so understood it is because of the difficulty of distinguishing it from light-hearted optimistic libertarianism, or the doctrine that all restraint on the satisfaction of our natural desires is evil. The difficulty with this doctrine is that human impulses, unguided by rational reflection, con-

flict with one another and undoubtedly lead to ugliness, vice, disease and death. Sanity involves some order and discrimination, rather than a promiscuous acceptance of all our impulses as good. That is why true liberalism values not only deliberative reason but also a certain amount of self-control, as necessary for the mastery of life. This emphasis on the element of self-restraint has given Spinoza the appearance of an other-worldly ascetic. But this is entirely a misunderstanding. The wise man, according to Spinoza, will "refresh and recreate himself with moderate and pleasant food and drink, with the sweet smells and attractions of growing plants, with ornamentation, music, games, plays and other things of this kind, of which anyone can make use without doing harm to another." Enjoyment as the satisfaction of human desires is, indeed, the very essence of the human good. Only it requires wisdom to liberate ourselves from natural brutish stupidity and enslaving passions. It is due to an inadequate consideration of the problem of evil, of our irrational passions, that eighteenth century liberalism fell into bankruptcy and was assigned to the materialists, who restricted human enjoyment to immediate sensuous possession. Though Spinoza as a consistent naturalist disbelieves in the actual existence of disembodied spirits (such belief is really cryptomaterialism), it never occurs to him to banish reason from nature. Reason as a natural energy not only widens but intensifies human enjoyment, in the very process of ordering and taming our natural impulses.

From this point of view, the supreme aim of the state—to promote real freedom—can be achieved only through such an ordering of things as will strengthen the process of reason as a habit.

Spinoza's preference for democracy, and his opposition to all dictatorship and militarism, are due to the connection which he sees between obedience to law and the general opportunity for deliberation and consent to the law. Of course it is true that the goodness or badness of a law is determined by its content, rather than by the fact that it was passed by many or by one. But in regard to the obedience based on consent, democracies are more favorably situated than governments in which the law is felt to be more alien. There may, doubtless, be a great deal of actual disobedience to law, even in a democracy. But where there is an opportunity for open discussion to bring to light men's grievances, and where attention to the interests of the multitude is politically imperative, there is less likelihood of the law's being upset by insurrection or other violent upheaval. Democracies are better able to change the law, when there is a general demand for it.

If it is objected that democratic states like the Dutch Republic are not as permanent as autocratic states like Turkey, Spinoza answers that monarchies are in fact disguised aristocracies, where courtiers or even courtesans frequently exert the real power. An absolute ruler is thus frequently kept in ignor-

ance of the true state of affairs; and in general the element of fear for his personal safety deprives him of the necessary calm and deliberative outlook. Arbitrary power may spread more fear or uncertainty among good citizens than among those disposed to violate or evade the decrees of the sovereign. In short, a despotic government based on fear or blind obedience is a state of slavery, and its wretchedness is not relieved by its permanence.

As inequality produces jealousy and discord, the peace of the state requires that invidious distinctions be avoided as far as possible. "It is certain that if equality of citizens be once laid aside, liberty perishes."

Political liberalism as opposed to absolutism shows itself in its attitude to the moral right of revolution. No state, of course, can allow itself to be defied or overthrown without violating its duty to maintain order. Yet as men cannot be ruled by fear alone, he who replaces an existing order by one generally felt to be better is a savior of his country. He should not, however, complain, if he is punished when he fails in his attempt.

The opponents of religious liberalism have condemned Spinoza for robbing mankind of its most precious possessions, faith in God, in freedom and in immortality.

It is true that Spinoza rejects the idea of an anthropomorphic God, who will respond to our flattering prayers, reward us for our unsuccessful efforts, and in general compensate us for the hardness of the natural order and the weaknesses of our reason. But such a conception of the deity is too much a product of human weakness to find support in any philosophy that has a vigorous sense for evidence. If, however, religion consists in humility (as a sense of infinite powers beyond our scope), charity or love (as a sense of the mystic potency in our fellow human beings), and spirituality (as a sense of the limitations of all that is merely material, actual or even attainable), then no one was more deeply religious than Spinoza.

It is true that Spinoza does not believe in the freedom of the will, in the sense of arbitrary or causeless volition. Such freedom would rob life of order and significant certainty. But Spinoza does believe in the possibility of attaining freedom from irrational passion, and in the conquest of our weaknesses by the very act of understanding them. True freedom or release from bondage is possible only by breaking the inner chains that prevent our turning to the vision of peace.

Finally, Spinoza has little regard for the immortality which means the postponement of certain human gratifications to a period beyond our natural life. He does, however, believe in the immortality which we achieve when we live in the eternal present or identify ourselves with those human values that the process of time can never adequately realize.

MORRIS R. COHEN.

Poems by Women

The Vision at Morning

This was seen, and not in dreaming,
In the east the wells of light,
Backward from their brink the night
Her lustreless deep sable streaming.

Those pools at breaking day were shown,
Which soon the broad gilt sun was staining,
Where all night the moon stood raining
Her clearest arrowy argent down.

This disclosed next after sleep,
Bliss the body could not hold,
Immaculate, untold,
Wearily seen on the crystal steep.

LÉONIE ADAMS.

The Drum

The drum roars up.
O blood refused,
Here's your answer.
The ear is used.

A miss and a beat,
The skin and the stick
Part and meet,
Gather thick.

Now they part;
Now they're meeting.
There's not in the heart
So much beating.

Use up the air
To the last drop,
To the last layer
Before you stop.

Whatever is toward
It's the drums I'll have,
Dying a coward,
Or living brave.

LOUISE BOGAN.

Midnight Beach

The long tide in retreat,
Leaves cool, unquested sand;
Like water is this land
That ripples at my feet.

Like land, this covert sea,
Where heaving acres drift;
Where fields unfathomed lift
Their lapping paths to me.

Effaced, all sound of day,
Even this hush is hushed;

The wind is cleanly washed,
Folded and laid away.

Immense, benevolent sky
Of broader noon, called night;
Darkness, and clearer sight
For the wide, inner eye.

Slow lines of white that break,
Gather, to break again;
And holding them in rein,
A half-moon, half-awake.

LEONORA SPEYER.

Your First Love

When the wild pear spills over,
When the wild pear breaks down
Its crocks full of silver,
A mile out of town,

Her foot set in music,
Her frock made of blue,
She fleets the young country
With looks all for you.

With a hundred poor things
Long, long is she done;
With a roof, or a field,
Or the golden round sun.

No heaven can hold her,
No grave keep her down,
When the wild pear is blowing
A mile out of town.

LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE.

Sargasso

Beyond the closed door, footsteps of one go away.
Another stays alone
Into whose mind, defenceless as water,
Sound plunges a stone.

Circles of echo flatten on a waste of murky sense . . .
Like crystal which blurs
From too much gazing . . . and the winds of reason gust
limply,
But not a wave stirs.

No image stains these rimless blind waters
Denying the moon,
And locking their tides where the arc of the sun draws
An ashen path at noon.

Here the chord of the rainbow dies on a gray note
Single and bleak,
Only emptiness has form, and pallid shadows of nothing
Move and speak.

JANET RAMSAY.

Washington Notes

I AM breaking no confidence when I state that the more astute among the little White House group by which Mr. Coolidge is surrounded, and with whom he talks politics at night in the library (and thereby comes as close to real enjoyment as his queer nature will permit), do not like the situation in the West, and are both irritated and worried by the way the Hon. Frank Lowden is playing his game. They make no secret of their feeling. Not that they babble about it, except among themselves, but no one who comes into contact with them at all can mistake their frame of mind. I am told that the idea of the President's taking his vacation in the West was first germinated in the gigantic brain of John Garibaldi Sargent, one night soon after the "courageous" veto of the McNary-Haugen bill, when, with his noble Chief, the ever faithful Stearns, and, I think, brave Bill Butler, who was on one of his monthly visits, they sat around the fire and discussed the politics of the situation. At first, the notion seemed to have in it considerable merit. The impulsive and hasty Cal, after turning it over in his mind for three days, informed the Presidential Spokesman—who informed the correspondents.

It of course got tremendous publicity at once, which was desired, naturally, but was not quite so happy in its results as usual. The chief reason for this was that in every news dispatch that went out, particular stress was laid on the fact that the primary purpose of the western visit was to placate the farmer. The trouble was that the purpose was made too plain. The farmer of reasonable intelligence could not fail to feel that perhaps he was being taken for some sort of a sucker. While invitations poured in on the White House from every state west of the Alleghanies, a sour note was struck in a number of newspapers in the Corn Belt. The great, influential farm journals—even those owned and edited by gentlemen who have been guests at the White House and on the Mayflower—had, about their "Welcome Coolidge" editorials, a certain sour cynicism as to the results.

Clippings from the western press were carefully scanned at the White House, and led to some modification of the original idea. As this is written, the purpose is not to flop down in the middle of the Corn Belt, and talk face to face with the farmers, but to go on out into the Rockies. Colorado or Wyoming are, as I write, the best bets, with the possibility of a stop on the way out or back for a speech to the farmers. But the idea so well portrayed by the cartoon in Ned McLean's Washington Post of Calvin and the Western farmer sitting on the fence, whittling wood together, while Cal explains why he vetoed the farmer's bill, is gone. The farming journals pretty well indicate there isn't any way it can be explained.

However, it would not do to think that because, in the Corn Belt, there is a certain farmer resentment over the blatant assumption that right after he has been kicked in the slats he can be "placated" by a pat on the shoulder, this western vacation is not a good idea. On the contrary, as a piece of Presidential publicity for the long summer days, it is a peach. To have gone again to the Adirondacks, or up into Massachusetts, would have been old stuff.

Out west, fresh copy will come as easy as rolling down hill. A new set of props, new visitors, new stunts, new scenery—the old propaganda machine can once more hit on high. Last summer it almost collapsed under the strain of making Mr. Coolidge appear an ardent and enthusiastic fisherman, whereas the fact is that he took about as much interest in and got as much pleasure out of fishing as he does out of watching a ball game—which is none at all. I have even had it whispered to me, by one of the President's friends, that he hated that fishing business more than anything else he has had to do since he became President. Out west, this time, there will be lots of new things he can do that will make splendid stuff for the movies and the roto-gravures as well as for the daily story. But I doubt very much whether they get him on a horse.

As to the irritation of the Coolidge group about the way Governor Lowden is playing the game, the chief basis is that while the movement in his behalf is clearly under way and apparently gaining some momentum, Governor Lowden himself is keeping so discreetly quiet that he cannot be made a target. Not that either Mr. Coolidge or his group of advisers would shoot; they would not need to. But the New York Herald-Tribune, the New York Times, and other great papers of the East, supporting the administration, would unlimber their guns and bang away. But Mr. Lowden is, at this writing, out somewhere on the Arizona desert, inaccessible and silent. He has said nothing for a long time. He said nothing when the McNary-Haugen veto came out. He has said nothing since. He is three times as silent as Mr. Coolidge—almost as untalkative as Clem Shaver, who, it will be recalled by a few with particularly tenacious memories, is Chairman of the so-called Democratic National Committee. Mr. Lowden makes no political speeches, indulges in no attacks, is non-partisan, impersonal, silent; yet the movement to nominate him for President steadily goes ahead.

If Mr. Coolidge makes a fight for the nomination it is generally agreed that he can defeat Mr. Lowden, or anyone else. However, if the third term tradition is to be broken, clearly the party demand for Mr. Coolidge must be little short of unanimous. Except at the call of a united party, it would be too great a risk to make the effort to hold on—and well the little group knows it. If the Lowden movement results in centring around him some half dozen great Republican states of the Middle West, encouragement will be given to favorite sons of the Jim Watson type, and the sidetracking of Mr. Coolidge, secretly so ardently desired by the Old Guard leaders, will be relatively easy.

In other words, Mr. Coolidge can get the nomination regardless of the Lowden movement if he exerts the full power of the Presidency, but if he does exert himself to that extent, he is vastly weakened—and he knows it. It is the prospect of not being able to get what he wants without fighting for it that disturbs him and his intimates. It is still too early to tell how things will develop. The one thing clear is that Republicans like Lowden and Dawes, who are waiting for Mr. Coolidge to make up his mind whether to run again or not, are doing all they can to make the affirmative decision difficult for him. It is hardly nice of them.

Poor Mr. Kellogg is back in Washington and not so well. He had no sooner landed than several of the less amenable correspondents raked up the old resignation story, polished it off and sent it out again. Hoover was again mentioned as his successor, also Houghton. The effect of these newspaper stories was to undo all the physical good derived by Mr. Kellogg from his stay in the South, and make him just as irritable and nervous as he was before Congress adjourned. The further effect was to stiffen him in his resolution not to resign, but to continue on the job even if he has to sign papers from a sick-bed, so long as the criticism of him keeps up. No man I have ever seen in a Cabinet position has had the idea more firmly fixed in his head that he will not quit "under fire" than Mr. Kellogg. I suggest to those journals eager to get rid of him, that if they can bring themselves to the hypocritical position of commending Mr. Kellogg for something or other, his leaving will be greatly hastened. Every time they hit him, he tightens his grip. If he could find some way of getting out, with dignity and credit, I think he would seize it. The trouble is, there seems to be no such way.

Washington.

T. R. B.

Beatrice Lillie

NOW that her producer has tried to present Miss Beatrice Lillie as the star of a musical comedy, the central figure in the evening's story, and the venture has failed and the New York run closed, it is interesting to think over the causes of her poor success and her qualities in general.

Up to this season, as everyone knows, Miss Lillie has been only one out of a number of leading performers, a member of a revue. As a part of Charlot's Revue she shone more starrily than most of the so-called stars in town; her audience was immense, her applause unanimous and devoted. In *Oh Please!* she was the leading lady of a musical comedy.

The story of *Oh Please!* is, I suppose, typical musical comedy matter. There are a man and wife whose passion is purity; he is a manufacturer of perfume, with flower-growing as a side issue. His purity wife has to go to New York; her brother does the Charleston on the hotel fire-escape with the leading lady of the show that is playing at the local theatre; the purity husband has the play closed as immoral. Then the leading lady comes to his house; and since she has been put out of the hotel through his influence, she plans to revenge herself by taking up her quarters there. And so she establishes herself in the room that his wife and he have always shared. She seduces him with her charms. The head of the perfume company arrives. He knows the high moral tone of this good man, he plans to offer him high promotion. The man is obliged to declare the actress his wife. The perfume official has once seen a woman on the train whom he knew at sight to be the only woman in the world for him, and the leading lady has been feeling the same way. The four of them meet in New York, husband and wife go home, and all ends happily. This, with songs, girls and boys for chorus, and dances and costumes, is the sum of the entertainment.

There is nothing to make us think that *Oh Please!* was

intended for uses other than those of all musical comedies. But Miss Lillie takes it far otherwise; she gathers up all musical comedy and guys it to exhaustion. She is wayward with its romance, comic with its sentiment. The trouble, then, with her in such a position begins with her not being on its plane, she is not bona fide. Just what being bona fide with a musical comedy is would be hard to say. The people in the audience are not pleased with what she does on the whole, but why? You could not say that they want Miss Lillie to take the piece seriously; for musical comedy consists in a sentimental avoidance of too much seriousness and in a gay and reckless admixture of song, dance, gag and inconsequent pretty display. We shall have to let it go by saying that Miss Lillie does not take the piece as it takes itself. This may not express the point, but it at least describes how the audience takes the musical comedy and wants it taken. That Miss Lillie's approach should not go down is therefore easy to understand.

There are many people, however, to whom musical comedy is not so bona fide a concern; people who might agree to smiling at it, burlesquing its sacred transitions from joy to wistful sweetness, from lyric legs to lyric hearts, from frail two-minute suspense to complete bliss with ensemble effects from the company. Such people might be supposed to rally around Miss Beatrice Lillie with delight and applaud her to the echo. Such people, on the other hand, might not be apt to go to musical comedy at all, and such a minority of them as went to *Oh Please!* may have gone as followers of Miss Lillie. But even if they did go, there was something special for them to surmount. For all their ardor and devotion to such an amazing comic actress, they were put to it a little by the fact that Miss Beatrice Lillie herself seemed not quite to have made up her mind as to what she did think of affairs; she took herself prettily now and again, and at the last, however recklessly mocking she may have been before, she could not resist the conventional evening gown and the lovely light and the picture of herself as adorable heroine and adorable leading lady. So that the effect fell between two stools, confused in intention, gayed, sentimental, ironic, lyrical.

There is, too, a curious lack of the pathetic in Miss Beatrice Lillie, so that we feel no instinct to defend her or protect. Her effect is of a curious meandering adequacy, and naïve completeness.

There was no such opportunity for her as she had in *March With Me*, the humor and point of which only grows greater with time and memory; but in *Oh Please!* Miss Lillie was as astonishing as ever. Her absurdity, her wit, her variety were not diminished, the imps and inspirations of her art were the same. She evidently belongs in a revue; but wherever she is, her comic gift is one of the best in the world; our delight in her is endless.

Much of such a talent as this comes under clowning. And more than 50 percent of that art, I am sure, lies in that element in acting that is its most uncommunicable, indescribable and expressive part, I mean movement. You can watch such a performer and see her weaving abstract shapes, patterns of movement that imitate nothing, that go steadily on with their vagrant, mad career, nearly always criss-cross with the words and the intention directly in mind. It is a sort of wandering irony. Taken with the rest of the moment, it describes the double life of our ab-

surd minds, it is a burlesque of our conscious purpose moving outward and the subconscious track on which meanwhile we ramble along.

Miss Beatrice Lillie, as you watch her, appears to be rendering into ironic values first one part of our human ego and then another. You will see her, in the song where the hero takes her and turns her upside down—showing, by the way, those hidden, satirical pantlets with the ermine tails at the knee!—he lifts her, holds her horizontal, turns her head to the floor till she catches on her fingertips, he hurls her in spirals, flattens her at his feet. The shaking and upheaval goes on; fortune and circumstance are highly various for this lady. But at every moment where there is a chance to recover one's presence of mind, she takes her position, the Grecian wrist asserts itself, the right amorous gesture goes to the hero's cheek, the grave formality of manner is assumed; and what we see is our little ego taking a position always; we see ourselves, whatever happens to make us absurd, whatever crumples us around, remembering to assume our attitudes, to take our line.

You can watch Miss Lillie step to the footlights with the great feather fan; we shall be sung to, with the luxury of Egypt waved before the singer. But the first note is off the key, the second scoops, the third only manages to slide toward the phrase. Then the fan opens, it is ragged, moth-eaten, full of sticks, off the key, too; dust and feathers fly over everything; but still it waves, seduction weaves on the same as ever.

Whether the player thinks much, applies her images and absurd inventions of movement and phrasing to philosophic ideas or comments on life, or merely goes by a certain teeming instinct, I do not know. But we must make it clear that what happens is not a symbol. It is not something that represents an idea, but something that can serve as the ground pattern of an idea, something in which the idea is included or implied. That obsession with those positions in the mind of this tumbled creature is not a symbol of anything, but it can include a whole irony out of life, as the circle on the face of a watch can include and describe the sun.

STARK YOUNG.

Man Ray and Metropolis

THE Film Guild, which brought a number of interesting movies to the small Cameo Theatre, in New York, has found association with a commercial producer irksome, and has returned to Sunday showings exclusively. This leaves the Fifth Avenue Playhouse alone in the work of offering superior films to small audiences on regular programs. But another house is being built, and it is unlikely that the movement which the Film Guild started will die out. Frequently there are reports that the six or seven hundred Little Theatres of the country, dark three weeks out of four, will be associated in a "chain" for the exhibition of good pictures. It is a good idea, and I should like to see a start made.

The first of the Film Guild's Sunday showings was devoted to Man Ray's abstract movie, *Emak Bakia*, and a film made by Marcel l'Herbier out of Pirandello's *The Late Matthias Pascal*. The film is called *The Living Dead*

Man, and all of Pirandello's exceptional tediousness in fiction or drama has been faithfully transferred to the screen. The direction of the dull story is commonplace, the mugging distasteful. Miss Lois Moran appears in the second half of the picture, and may help it on; I cannot report, because the first half wearied me so that I went away.

Man Ray's film has gone straight to hell with good intentions. It has its source in the same feeling for the cinematic, the same protest against "literature," as the Léger-Murphy Ballet Mécanique and Beaumont's *A Quoi Rêvent les Jeunes Films*. In Man Ray's experiment you get the usual elements: objects in motion, objects seen at unusual angles, distortion; at rare moments a few feet of film create a startling, almost ravishing effect, and clearly do this by means of movement, not statically. The changes of pace, the rhythm, are occasionally effective. But as a whole this film does not come up to the level of the Beaumont forerunner, because the whole and most of the parts lack significance. There is almost no relation between any hundred feet of film and the preceding or subsequent hundred; it is a camera man's holiday without the single idea and the single effect of a good abstract or even a good commercial movie. A picked audience hissed it a little and then settled down to enjoy the dullness of Pirandello.

Stark Love is also a holiday—the holiday of a Paramount director, Karl Brown, who was so enchanted with the life of the Great Smoky Mountains that he proposed to film that life without the tricks of the contemporary commercial story-film. The picture which resulted has affinities with *Nanook*, *Grass*, and *Moana*, although a plot was injected into it to sustain interest, and the juvenile leads were rather amateur actors than simple folks going about their simple daily occupations. There are extraordinary scenic beauty, some historical interest, and excellently directed scenes of pathos and humor; the picture avoids nearly all the faults of the commercial film, and is refreshing. But on the whole I feel that the experiment proves little except that bad movies are bad. Good amateur acting, even good movement before the camera, is better than bad professional acting; for the movie it comes closer to a true cinematic technique of *playing*, because it is not encumbered with evil traditions. But simplicity and awkwardness, delightful as they are, have no standing whatever in comparison with the work of the few good players of the movies. The salvation of the pictures must be accomplished by making the professionals good, and not by abjuring professionalism.

Bits of some of the earliest films in existence appear in *The March of the Movies*. In the twelve-minute super-spectacle, *The Great Train Robbery*, nearly every player was a beginner, and parts of it are very good movie indeed. The action is rapid and clear, and a little interlude of a rustic dance seemed to me technically better than all of the scenes of high life and cabarets I have ever seen. I had begun to doubt whether my enthusiasm for the old serials and westerns was justified, but, seeing this ancestor of them all, I felt convinced that they were on the right path for the movies. The technique which began to develop there has never matured; another, and evil, technique, imported from the stage, took its place.

A jump of exactly thirty years brings us to *Metropolis*, the Ufa film sponsored by Paramount, which is so daring in its importations and so cautious in its own product. I

did not believe, when I saw the film, that the original could have been so mawkish, that the good idea in it could have been so languidly handled and so spoiled by the German directors. I thought that the sentimental scenes had probably taken up proportionately less footage, and that the important sequences dominated the picture. The most reliable information corrects me; of the seven reels cut out for the American production, the greater portion were concerned with a sillier sub-plot and grosser sentimentality than now appear. It is suspected that this was a German effort to make the film palatable to Americans.

The interesting portions of *Metropolis* are those which show machinery and the mechanized mankind of the future. Intellectually you can trace the idea back to Samuel Butler and Karel Capek, among others; technically *Metropolis* has learned nearly all the lessons of *Caligari*, *The Last Laugh*, *Deception*, and *Variety*; it is, therefore, as good, in its good parts, as the movie has ever been. It exploits fantasy, and it stylizes movement. It uses vast crowds with meaning, so that a two-minute sequence of the Tower of Babel is worth the whole of Mr. DeMille's *Ten Commandments*. Without imitating portraits, it creates beings who live like the men in Grosz's drawings, or Adolf Dehn's. What L  ger tried to do with machinery in *The New Enchantment* is here successfully accomplished with actual machines. I cannot think of a single good trick of the camera which has not been effectively used in *Metropolis*. It is spoiled by lack of balance; the story is absurd in spots and seems to have been edited and titled in an effort to prove that Mr. Channing Pollock's *The Fool* was not as bad a picture as it looked. I forgive all that. For *Metropolis*, with its beautiful shots of fantastic buildings, and its terrific use of electrical phenomena as elements in a dynamic composition which actually becomes the climax of the picture, in its correct and complete exploitation of the camera, will again do for us what Germany has done twice before. *Metropolis* had a good press, but a meagre box office in its first week; it is now picking up and will probably run to three or four weeks at the Rialto. So I do not think it will take as long for us to learn its lessons as it did for us to understand the virtues of *Caligari* and *The Last Laugh*. If we can maintain our own virtues in balance with the German, the movie will be cross-fertilized again.

When I heard that there were to be no speeches at the opening of the vast Roxy Theatre, my heart leaped up as it always does at the thought of a movie house actually showing movies. But, after all, Roxy offered selections from Massenet and a medley from Faust, when he was running a five-cent movie twenty years ago. He is the father of "presentations," one of those fathers who constantly improve their offspring. So the entertainment began with an organ recital played by three organists, leading me to hope that when the orchestra rose from the pit, it would be led simultaneously by all four of Roxy's conductors. I was disappointed. There came a lofty dedication, with well managed light effects; an extremely silly number about the genesis of *The Star-Spangled Banner*; a rendition, by Julius Bledsoe, of *Swanee River* in front of one of the best scenics I have ever seen, projected by a new and admirable method; then an enormous corps de ballet surrounding a gentleman with scarves and a really delightful ballerina; a

Russian melody by Irving Berlin (new); an appalling Vitaphone which, I am again persuaded, has less to do with the movies than any of the other elements noted in this program; and finally, as the tenth number on the list, Gloria Swanson's new film, *The Loves of Sunya*.

If God had intended me to be a Roxy-wrecker, he would have omitted from this film its solitary point of interest. With the help of that Dudley Murphy who collaborated with L  ger, a number of sequences were done in the abstract manner, but specifically related to the progress of the play. In that way the abstract movie acquired a meaning—regrettably imposed from the outside, a narrative, not a cinematic significance, at best. But it had meaning and was much more effective than the jumble of shots in the *Man Ray* picture. Mr. Albert Parker, who directed the rest of *Sunya*, is a capable man. He was able to use the German technique of camera angles without corrupting his native manner and without delaying the story. The story was appalling, and the picture, as the first presentation in a house seating over six thousand people, some of whom paid eleven dollars for a seat, was contemptible.

GILBERT SELDES.

The House That Clark Built

THE Clark house on Fifth Avenue is coming down. In a few days the Senator's palace will begin to chip and crumble away and be pried off with crowbars into dismembering trucks. Its fat corduroy ribs will sink down nearer and nearer to the level of the sidewalk, with a click of bricks and puffs of plaster dust, until at last its seven million dollars' worth of minerals has become nothing but a hole in the ground, a hole full of rubble and loose earth and water and Italians. From the hole in the ground—by this time worth a great deal more than when the house stood upon it—steel girders will rise, and by the end of the year a respectable flat packing-box of an apartment house will have removed all trace of scandal. For the Clark house was a scandal, even more than it was a joke, long ago in 1906. Decent people were indignant, and considered the chef d'  uvre of Lord, Hewlett and Lord as an affront to the city and to themselves; there was a wave of protest, and hundreds could have been found willing to take considerable pains to stop the building or tear it down as soon as it was up. Gradually indignation changed to amazement, yet there are people who, even now, will feel that revenge is theirs, whose sore eyes will be healed at last.

But twenty years in New York equal a century in any European capital. Twenty long years have mellowed the Clark house, in our hearts if not to outward view, and it is now a full-fledged antique. Time has consecrated its ugliness; it should not have been disturbed, it is almost an act of vandalism to tear it down. I would not be the only one to subscribe cheerfully (though not heavily) to a fund for buying the Clark house out of private hands and presenting it to the city, or to the nation, as a permanent curiosity, as a peerless piece of ludicrous solemnity, as a monument to one of the strangest of millionaires, as a crystallization of the pioneer imagination, a reminder of our own recent past, a treatise on copper, and a tribute to the state of Montana.

If you found a life-size, genuine dodo in your room, a ponderous, stuffy bird, remarkable chiefly for being extinct, you would do well to hang on to it. A million dodos are a nuisance, but one is a miracle.

Senator Clark sincerely believed that his dodo was going to be a triumph of architecture. He chose a firm with Beaux Arts antecedents, he was eager to do the right thing; his own taste, if any, was kept in leash; he had a right to expect a competent performance. He received—or, if he did not know it, he was soon informed that he had received—a mountainous atrocity, a nightmare unexcused by the wild hand of amateurishness, a heavy, indigestible dream, all the worse for speaking its puffy confusion with a thoroughly professional accent. The Clark house was thorough, it was workmanlike, it had a tradition behind it, and the undeniable presence of these qualities doubled the weight of its atrociousness. If one squints at it so as to see the mass unencumbered with detail, and if one succeeds at at the same time in pretending that the tower is not there at all, the main lines are heavy and ordinary, but not actually offensive. The detail is terrible, but in itself not terrible enough to constitute a crime. The crime is in the combination of the two, in the unchecked riot of doughy triviality over a stupendous area. The Michelin company used to advertise its tires all over France by means of a mildly amusing figure, nicknamed Bibendum, who was a sort of Humpty-Dumpty latitudinally clothed in inflated inner-tubes. The Clark house is a Bibendum among houses. Rumor has it that the corduroy effect was used to symbolize logs, and to suggest a log-cabin. But not all logs are waterlogged, and the Clark house looks as if it were nearly ready to burst and dribble some kind of expensive, stony syrup all over Fifth Avenue.

Its public funeral is over. For some weeks visitors were allowed in at fifty cents apiece—a final insult: admission should have been free, or ten dollars. There is no heat in the place, and shivering couples look at tattered walls where once hung Corot, Whistler, Troyon, Gainsborough. Everything hangable has been removed. Among those missing were noted: 82 yards of rare seventeenth century jardinière velvet, the \$120,000 gold dinner service, \$5,000 worth of Royal blue Sèvres soup plates, a \$10,000 Kirmansheh mille fleurs, eight Flemish tapestry-covered cushions (\$7,200), and several million dollars' worth of paintings.

Gone, all gone. Red baize hangs on the gallery's walls, spiked with gigantic nails, and which nail was for Corot, which for Troyon, who can tell? There is no mille fleurs under foot. The bathrooms are in perfect condition, great white slabby cubes of glass and nickel and show-window showers and chilly desolation. The coldness, the stoniness, the marbleness of the halls and staircases grope timidly toward what the twenty-one bathrooms alone achieve. There are one hundred and thirty rooms in this house, thirty of them for servants. The kitchens wind and angle up, from their deep dungeons, to the dining-room, as narrowly and darkly as if they were the ammunition vaults of an obsolete battleship. Hundreds, thousands of feet below ground, a clammily magnificent swimming pool echoes to our hushed voices. Here in the underworld are endless cellars, recesses, cubby-holes, lanes, in sinister, glazed white tile. A fabulous pit, black and full of wheels: the elevator power room. Another pit, crawling with white, worm-

like, giant pipes: the furnace, which burned seventeen tons of coal a day and required four tons merely to get going. But these viscera are not supposed to be seen; it may be doubted if the Senator ever saw them himself. So let's go back to the naked alleys of stone and Circassian walnut; to the self-supporting staircase, to the ceiling from Sherwood Forest, to the mineral beauties from the two quarries, marble and granite, which the Senator bought, outright, for the building of this house; to walnut, sandalwood and satinwood and natural American oak; to the carved maple, the innumerable wainscotings and panelings, exquisite and expensive, forlorn and dull; to the banquet room and the music room and the breakfast room and the morning room and the petit salon; to the grand organ, which combines, under one vast central government of sound, a swell organ: nineteen stops and tremolo; a great organ: ten stops and chimes; a choir organ: eighteen stops and tremolo; an echo organ: eight stops and tremolo; and a pedal organ: ten stops, twenty-three couplers and thirty-one combination pistons.

All this, too, will melt away. Some of it will be sold, most of it, the tons and granite and marble of it, will be junked. Sooner or later nothing at all will be left. Sooner or later the picture of Senator Clark will fade from our minds—Senator William A. Clark, in the eighties a wild-eyed dandy with clouds of hair luxuriously poised on his brow and chin, as if he were a mountain; Senator Clark forty years later, even more elegant, tamed only a little by age; inscrutable, wilful, magnificent, imperious; the man who began life selling supplies to miners, as more profitable than going after the gold itself, and ended it in the study of French (three months every year) and the purchase of art. Copper made him rich, but he owned coffee in Mexico, gold mines in Arizona, lead mines in the Cœur d'Alène, coal mines in Carbon County, Montana. And Whistlers and Romneys and Corots and Lawrences on Fifth Avenue. He was the first Democratic Senator from Montana, and thirty boy choristers sang at his funeral. In 1900 he was supposed to be worth fifty millions. He was eighty-six when he died. His favorite poem was Thanatopsis. About thirty years ago Clark decided to be Senator from Montana. You can read in fiery C. P. Connolly's muck-raking in the Century how Clark's lieutenants paid out \$431,000 in bribes to the Montana legislature (Senators were then elected by the legislature). You can read the names of several dozen legislators, and the amounts paid to each, from five to twenty-five thousand dollars. For some weeks Helena was a boom town, with feverish legislators running after or feebly resisting the Clark pay-dirt. One of his leaders said that "Every man who votes for Clark is to be paid, and the man who votes for him without being paid is a fool." A sudden lurid disclosure gave Clark only seven votes on the first ballot. But three weeks later he was elected, with fifty-four votes. The town swam in champagne. Clark champagne. Thirty thousand dollars' worth of it. Nothing but champagne was drunk for a whole day and a whole night, and schoolboys lined up at the bars.

This is the man whose sole monument is about to be taken away from him.

ROBERT LITTELL.

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

Some Questions for Mr. Coolidge

SIR: Your readers may be interested in the following communication which has been addressed to President Coolidge by the Willard Straight Post of the American Legion, of New York City.

New York City.

WILLARD STRAIGHT POST,
No. 842, AMERICAN LEGION.

The Honorable Calvin Coolidge,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

The present strained relations with Mexico, the presence of our military and naval forces in Nicaragua, and the support afforded by them to the régime now in power there, lead us, as a group of veterans of the late War, to inquire:

1. Is it the policy of the administration to interfere in the internal affairs of Latin-American countries in an endeavor to maintain order and suppress revolution?

2. While recognizing the binding force of treaties which call for or permit the use of our armed forces to maintain order in another country, is it the policy of the administration to negotiate or to continue in force such treaties, and thus place the United States in a position where it is called upon to fulfil those obligations by such interference in internal affairs?

3. Is it the policy of the administration to use our armed forces to protect the property interests of Americans or the other foreign nationals, where disturbed conditions in Latin-American countries may endanger those interests?

4. In the present Mexican difficulty, why is the administration apparently unwilling to arbitrate with Mexico any question of technical confiscation or impairment of property rights?

5. If under any of the circumstances suggested in the foregoing questions the administration is willing to support by force a régime recognized and approved by the United States, will the administration, on the other hand, withdraw recognition, raise an embargo on arms, and, in effect, foment a revolution against a régime which is disapproved?

6. Will the administration lend the aid of our armed forces to collect debts owing by a foreign government to our nationals?

In summary: How far is the administration willing to go, or does it propose to go, in interfering, in one form or another, in the internal affairs of Latin-American countries?

We believe that the country at large is left in the dark on these vital questions of our Latin-American policy because the present administration, in common with other preceding administrations, has not made clear to the country what that policy is. The moment is opportune for a restatement of our policy in those respects, for the adoption of an attitude of greater frankness in the statement of our aims, the methods we propose to pursue, and how the State Department, our civil representatives, military leaders, and treaty negotiators carry out the responsibilities put upon them in Latin-America, particularly in Central America and the Caribbean Basin.

Respectfully yours,

WILLARD STRAIGHT POST,
No. 842, AMERICAN LEGION.

New York City.

A Story of Philosophers

SIR: Is it too late to join the absorbing controversy on The Story of Philosophy which has been going on in your columns? I, for one, fail to see how all the apologists in the world can justify Doctor Durant's assertion to the effect that Spinoza is "the greatest of all modern philosophers" (not even Kant excepted); nor how, with any knowledge of the incalculable debt philosophy owes to Kant's fellow epistemologists—Descartes, Locke, Hume and Schopenhauer in particular—they can have the hardihood to defend so vulnerable an historian. The author of The Story of Philosophy has taken his stand upon Spinozism and has written

his entire book from this altogether untenable point of view. There is no case to be made for pantheism today. Pantheism is a territory long since deserted by philosophers and inhabited today only by religious mystics.

Doctor Durant, moreover, refers to Schopenhauer's first treatise as The Fourfold Root of Sufficient Reason; believes The World as Will and Representation, in spite of its title, to be a "great anthology of woe" (Bernard Shaw could have told him that Schopenhauer's pessimism is the least thing about him); thinks Voltaire, the eighteenth century Deist, to have been a great philosopher; classifies Herbert Spencer and Francis Bacon, both mere empiricists, as great philosophers also, and, finally, devotes eight pages to a serious consideration of Hegel—actually, Hegel—after dismissing Descartes, Locke and Hume with two short paragraphs apiece.

Are all these grave blunders to be condoned simply because they have been set forth in eminently readable fashion?

Brooklyn, New York.

FRANKLIN NEUMAN.

The Poetry of Hart Crane

SIR: When a writer of intelligence and influence stoops to make use of such methods as Mr. Waldo Frank employs in his review of Mr. Hart Crane's poetry in your issue of March 16, it is surely the duty of every responsible author to protest in the public interest.

With Mr. Crane's work I am not extremely familiar; what I have seen of it seems to me vague in intention and obscure in diction. Persons whose sincerity and competence I have reason to trust have assured me of their interest in it. What moves me to protest is Mr. Frank's own obvious and culpable insincerity in writing about Mr. Crane.

At the head of his article he says: "I rage at the common practice of American reviewers in heaping superlative praise on mediocre books." I thereupon look down the column and read the following: "Mr. Crane's poems are as distinct from those of other contemporary American poets as one metal from another"; "This man is a mystical maker"; "It is the heart of his vision that is new"; "His outset was that mastery of the current poetical forms to which most poets are satisfied to aspire"; "This almost unequaled vision"; "He has grasped his power, as sure and careless as he could, for one commanding purpose."

Surely if this is not superlative praise heaped upon poor Mr. Crane's corpse, I do not know what is, and not for one moment does Mr. Frank tell us why Mr. Crane is significant, nor what his work aims at doing. Instead, he remarks naïvely that "it is not easy to tell," draws a diagram which any student of Plato's or Shelley's work could easily construct, and which has nothing to do with Mr. Crane's merits or demerits, and then dismisses the whole subject with the remark: "I do not feel that Mr. Crane succeeds uniformly." And over this effort, with its distorted syntax and phrasing, he has wasted two columns of space! Further comment is needless.

New York City.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER.

A Hint to the Oil Men

SIR: When Carleton Beals's article on Mexico appeared (February 23) I saw a practical way of hearkening to conscience in the matter, and promptly stopped buying oil from one of the most trouble-making companies, and engaged it from one of those companies which, according to Carleton Beals, is accepting and adjusting itself to the Mexican laws. I have also been careful to write this reason plainly to the offices and headquarters of both companies. I have given the New Republic's article to a local agent who is soon to attend a state conference of oil men. Could you not suggest that this might be a good thing for many others to do? It is simple and logical.

Fayetteville, Pennsylvania.

L. L. Dock.

Lords and Commons

Palmerston, by Philip Guedalla. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 548 pages. \$5.

Early Life and Letters of John Morley, by F. W. Hirst. New York: The Macmillan Company. Two vols. 612 pages. \$10.50.

THESE two biographies present types of English character and statesmanship as remote from one another as if the representatives had lived on opposite sides of the Alps. Palmerston was of a family who cultivated the aristocratic forms of connoisseurship and sportsmanship, dividing their residence between Sheen in Ireland, and the classic mansion at Broadlands, near the mouth of the Thames. John Morley was the son of a physician of Blackburn, one of the earliest towns of Lancashire to fall victim to the industrial revolution, and distinguished by its precocity of ugliness. Palmerston belonged to the hereditary ruling class, who assimilated Parliament to the hunting field or the race track, to whom politics was an exciting and speculative form of sport. Morley was of the middle class which, having secured a measure of political responsibility by the Reform Bill, practised politics as a serious effort for the improvement of mankind. Palmerston was a representative of manners; Morley, of mind. Palmerston was a conformist and defender of the established church, a Cavalier. Morley was a spirit naturally religious, whose intellect and conscience drew him into revolt against Christianity, a Puritan. Mr. Guedalla shows his acuteness by labeling Palmerston as of the eighteenth century, the associate and successor of Liverpool, Wellington, Canning and Castlereagh, by whom the ethos of that century was prolonged in England for a generation after 1800, and sustained by Palmerston himself for another generation. Morley, on the other hand, was completely of the nineteenth century, the successor of John Stuart Mill, the contemporary of Spencer, Huxley, Meredith and Matthew Arnold, who, by the same lag in public opinion and custom, were condemned to remain voices in the wilderness until more than two thirds of their century had passed. Intellectually, the nineteenth century in England began with Waterloo; but practically and politically its advent was delayed until Gladstone's ministry of 1868. Ironically enough, the general election which marked the triumph of liberal principles resulted in the defeat and retirement of the chief expounder of them, John Stuart Mill. Morley, who finally entered Parliament in 1883, was the only member of the philosophical group who deduced the political principles of liberalism from utilitarianism to have for a considerable term of years the responsibility of giving them a practical test.

Looked at in detail, the two careers offer an even more significant contrast. Palmerston was given the education prescribed since the Boke named the Governour for those who should have authority in a commonwealth. In addition he learned some political economy. After being defeated for Parliament twice at Cambridge, and elected but unseated for bribery at Horsham, he was given a seat for Newport in 1809. Even before this, he had been provided with a place at the Admiralty, and at the age of twenty-five was invited by Mr. Perceval to become Chancellor of the Exchequer. He had the wisdom to refuse, and accepted instead the office of Secretary at War, which he held for nearly twenty years. He resigned, with the other followers of Canning, from Wellington's cabinet, and when the Whigs came into power in 1830, he became Secretary for

Foreign Affairs, which office he held, except for the years of Peel's ministry, almost continuously until 1852. His policy, like Canning's, was to play a leading part in every diplomatic game in Europe, and above all to protect British interests in every quarter of the world. The Opium War with China and the bombardment of Canton stand out as a part of the indelible record which remains to confront his country today—but Palmerston jauntily remarked that "we must make them all clearly understand, though in the civilest terms, that our treaty rights must be respected, unless they choose to have their seaports knocked about their ears." The culmination of this policy came in 1850, when, with the Crown, the Lords and the Cabinet against him, Palmerston was brought to book for his attack on Greece to collect enormous damages for a Levantine naturalized Englishman, who had suffered in a riot in Athens. He won the great triumph of his career in the famous *Civis Romanus* speech, in which he announced the program of imperialism with the assertion that British subjects throughout the world shall not be left "to the indifferent justice . . . of the country in which they may happen to be."

Palmerston made foreign affairs the most interesting aspect of government, to the distress of reformers like Cobden. His indifference to the domestic program of the Whigs made his alliance with the Tories always a possibility; and his faculty for creating the most valuable type of news gave him extraordinary influence with the press, and large control of public opinion. He was thus in a position to play the game such as no other parliamentary statesman has ever enjoyed, and he played it with zest. His manoeuvre, when under pressure of the Crown he was forced out of the Foreign Office in 1851, became the classic example of political strategy, and furnished the dramatic episode of many political novels. Within three weeks of his deposition, he had turned his former colleagues out of office. When the coalition ministry under Lord Aberdeen was formed, he went to the Home Office, and calmly waited while the cabinet blundered into the Crimean War. Out of a prolonged crisis he turned up as the only man who could carry on the Queen's government. He took office as Prime Minister in 1855 at the age of seventy, and except for a few months ruled the empire until his death, ten years later. He had sat in Parliament for fifty-six years, and held office for forty-six.

Compared with this dashing record, John Morley's story seems plain and drab. It has, however, an interest and suspense of its own. From second-rate public schools, Morley got to Oxford on a scholarship, and went thence to London in 1860 to study law and practise journalism. His intimate friend was Frederic Harrison, the chief apostle of Comte in England, and his mentor was John Stuart Mill. He wrote for the *Saturday Review* along with Robert Cecil, not yet Marquis of Salisbury, and Leslie Stephen. In 1867 he became editor of the *Fortnightly Review*, and made it the great forum for the discussion of the problems of the intellectual and social life to which science and democracy had given new urgency. He made a notable series of studies of the French philosophers, Turgot, Diderot, Voltaire, Rousseau, Condorcet, and of Burke. His life of Cobden was an exposition of a career opposed in every point to that of Palmerston by reason of a principle stated by Morley himself: "To abstain from intervention in the affairs of other nations is not only recommended by economic prudence but is the only condition in which proper attention can be paid to the moral and social necessities at home."

Morley found no seat in Parliament awaiting him.

He was an unsuccessful candidate in 1869 and again in 1880, before he was elected for Newcastle in 1883. He had already become an important figure in the Liberal party, and had taken strong ground against the imperialist policies of holding Ireland in subjection by force, and extending the frontiers of India and South Africa. He had broken a long and intimate friendship with Lord Lytton when the latter, as Viceroy of India, committed the empire to a forward policy in Afghanistan; and he had denounced Sir Bartle Frere, the High Commissioner in South Africa, in terms which anticipate his condemnation of the attack on the Boers twenty years later, for launching "an unnecessary and untimely, and therefore criminal war." He had also expressed his opinion of the occupation of Egypt. "Until some system is devised which fulfills the programme not only of 'Egypt for the Egyptians,' but 'Egypt by the Egyptians' for so long we shall find ourselves plunging deeper into entanglements." When he entered Parliament, the Gladstone ministry had already taken possession of Egypt, and was involved in the Soudan. After Gordon's death, Morley offered a resolution against sending troops to crush the Mahdi, and in a letter expressed himself even more decisively. "If Gladstone is really going to plunge us into a Soudan war, he will be an apostate of the blackest dye." Mr. Hirst concludes his two volumes with the election of 1885, as a result of which Morley was returned to Parliament and took office as Chief Secretary for Ireland, thus entering on a new phase of his career, in which he was subjected to the extreme test of the Liberal—administrative responsibility for a system which had been built up in defiance of the philosophy which he professed.

The contrast between these heroes is borne out by the method and style of their biographers. Mr. Guedalla sketches Palmerston with broad, sweeping strokes befitting that statesman's own large, easy gesture of control. He does not explain or excuse. He does not go into details of the most questionable exploit of Palmerston's career, his connection with the Crimean War, out of which he emerged indispensable. For such documentation we must look to Mr. Kingsley Martin's *The Triumph of Lord Palmerston*. Mr. Guedalla uses detail only for color. He treats his subject as a man of period, and his most brilliant bravura passages are those in which by rapid succession of multitudinous facts he recalls the fashions, the interests, the atmosphere of the years and decades as they pass. Mr. Guedalla's bibliography shows enormous range of material, but it is all digested into his fluent and brilliant narrative—perhaps a bit too fluent and too consciously brilliant. Mr. Hirst goes to the other extreme. He has Morley's *Recollections* and his own, as well as letters to Frederic Harrison and to Miss Grace Morley, as materials, and he uses them, if anything, too conscientiously. His narrative is frequently crowded, but now and then we are surprised by a strange suppression. For example, the student of the nineteenth century magazine will be disappointed when he asks the reason for Morley's relinquishment of the editorship of the *Fortnightly*, to read only that "a controversy with the publishers, Messrs. Chapman and Hall, brought this important episode to an end." His disposition to let his subject speak for himself, admirable as it is, savors somewhat of caution, with which his occasional bits of criticism are rather self-consciously at variance. More detachment will surely be needed when Mr. Hirst approaches the more difficult portion of his task—for we cannot imagine that he will abandon Viscount Morley at the point where the professional services of a biographer are most needed.

ROBERT MORSS LOVETT.

The Eighteenth Century Complete

The Oxford Book of Eighteenth Century Verse, chosen by David Nichol Smith. Oxford: The Clarendon Press. 727 pages. \$3.75.

THIS latest addition to the series of Oxford anthologies is, in some ways, extremely interesting. Unlike most of the rest of the series, it is less an anthology in the sense of a selection of particularly fine flowers of verse than a representative exhibition of the poetry produced in England during the eighteenth century. Instead of merely garnering the best pieces of the best poets in the customary fashion, Mr. Smith has given copious examples of the work of every poet of the period who enjoyed any considerable reputation, and has unearthed many curious and interesting specimens from obscure sources; he has, furthermore, ranged very widely, beyond the bounds of poetry proper, among the fields of popular and humorous verse: so that, besides Pope, Goldsmith, Cowper, etc., we have also such neglected heroes of Johnson's *Lives* as Shenstone, Dyer and Tickell; a fine sprinkling of unfamiliar epigrams and vers de société; the antiquarian forgeries of Chatterton and Bishop Percy; the Scotch poetry, not only of Burns, but also of Allan Ramsay and of others less well known; the hymns of Toplady, the Wesleys and Watts; such popular songs and doggerels as *The British Grenadiers*, *The Roast Beef of Old England*, *Sally in Our Alley* and *The Vicar of Bray*, assigned, when possible, to their true authors and dates; the *Vegetable Loves* of Erasmus Darwin; and the satires of Canning.

Mr. Smith takes the eighteenth century, not as a name for a school of poetry, but simply as a space of a hundred years. With a few exceptions toward the end, he considers anything written between 1700 and 1800 as proper for inclusion in his book. And the result is that, as we are able to trace, in all its sprouts and ramifications, the growth of English poetry during this period, we become aware that it was far more various and far more living than we had imagined. "If we are disposed," says Mr. Smith, "to search in this volume for the explanation of such catchwords as 'the poetry of the Town,' 'the tyranny of Pope,' 'the domination of the heroic couplet,' we are likely to be disappointed." He looks forward to a time when "we shall have ceased to look upon the poetry of this century as the battle-ground of forces ranged somehow under the standards of the 'classical' and the 'romantic,' and shall have little use for the flimsy mottoes with which both standards are marked." What we actually see, in Mr. Smith's collection, after the first days of Prior, Pope and Swift—here announced, with peculiar appropriateness, by the elegance, the moderation, the epicureanism and the complacency of *Pomfret's Choice*—is a steady and gradual quickening of sensibility, which culminates first in the masterpieces of Collins and Gray and, later, in those of Coleridge and Wordsworth; and a never stifled lyric instinct which has tuned its throat in a thousand delightful songs before it finally finds its full voice in Blake and Burns. (Mr. Smith has even found a forerunner of Byron's Beppo and Don Juan in Sir John Henry Moore.)

Mr. Smith is an excellent historian; and, from this point of view, his anthology is interesting. He is, unfortunately, not such a good connoisseur. He is occupied primarily with representing his poets rather than with giving us their finest things: some short poems which should certainly be in-

cluded—Swift on his Deafness, Pope on Windsor Forest (the verses to Martha Blount)—do not appear; and he has no conscience about mutilating long poems, always a bad practice in an anthology. Why, for example, could not Mr. Smith have printed two of the best of Pope's epistles in their entirety, rather than give us choppings of half a dozen? Swift, too little read as a poet, yet certainly one of the major poets of the century, is particularly unsatisfactorily represented. There is no example of his almost Huysmansesque poetry of the city—the City Shower and the Street-Cries—and no example of the incomparable trenchancy of his shorter satiric pieces—the Judgment Day ("Go, go—you're bit!") and the Duke of Marlborough as Midas. In some cases, however, Mr. Smith has been happier in his selection. Perhaps no poet, in Mr. Smith's anthology, is allowed to appear in a more attractive light than Dr. Isaac Watts. Mr. Smith has given some of the best of Watts's hymns—and Watts's best is unsurpassed in English; and some of his Divine Songs, for the Use of Children—so often quoted in nursery rhyme fragments—in their entirety. Dr. Watts combined his two genres in one of the most charming poems in the volume, A Cradle Hymn:

See the kinder Shepherds round him,
Telling Wonders from the Sky;
There they sought him, there they found him,
With his Virgin-Mother by. . . .

Lo, he slumbers in his Manger,
Where the horned Oxen fed;
Peace, my Darling, here's no Danger,
Here's no Ox a-near thy Bed. . . .

EDMUND WILSON.

Business Fortune-Telling

Forecasting Business Conditions, by Charles O. Hardy and Garfield V. Cox. New York: The Macmillan Company. 434 pages. \$4.

A RECENT article by Earnest Elmo Calkins in the Atlantic Monthly asserts: "Securing prosperity by advertising for it is at least as certain as securing any other concerted action by the same means. . . . Business continues to be good as long as people think it is. If they can be made to continue to think it is, as they have been made to think they want motor cars or silk stockings, then business cycles of alternating good and bad times are as obsolete as bicycles." If this is true, advertising for prosperity is a needless expense. All that is necessary is to pass a law requiring that all public officials, business men, bankers, and especially professional forecasters, shall at all times predict overwhelming prosperity.

Strange as it may seem to Mr. Calkins, however, predictions of prosperity have sometimes been followed by depression, and predictions of depression have, less frequently, been followed by prosperity. The business fortune-teller is engaged in a risky occupation even if his clients act according to his advice. That is because the behavior and causes of business cycles are not yet known with anything approaching scientific accuracy. Besides the psychological theory which Mr. Calkins advances, dozens of other theories, with hundreds of variations, have been advanced by others, and none has yet obtained universal assent. There is Professor Moore's theory which connects the curve of business with the course of the planet Venus. There are the similar theories which go back not quite so

far, to sun-spots, weather, or the crops. There is Babson's famous analogy with the law of physics which postulates "equal and opposite action and reaction." The cause has been located in interest rates, prices, overproduction, underconsumption, profits, wages, politics, accidents. Some say the cycle is inherent in the capitalist order itself, others, that there is no such thing as the cycle.

Messrs. Hardy and Cox are familiar enough with the literature to admit the confusion, and yet they set out to aid the practical man who must make his decisions without waiting for the ultimate conclusions of science. A little light, they think, is better than none. They point out that the fluctuations of business differ from time to time. Two main lines of attack on the problem have been used by the forecasters: one an historical analysis, which assumes that the phenomena of the cycle are regular enough so that they may be expected to repeat themselves at least crudely; the other a "cross-cut" analysis, which treats each situation separately, with an attempt to assess the nature and importance of the forces currently at work. They describe briefly the main statistical devices relied upon to interpret past experience, such as series of index numbers, correlation to determine the time lags among different series, the elimination of long-term tendencies by trend lines, the elimination of seasonal variation, the use of the "standard deviation" to compare curves whose swings have different amplitudes. Some indication is given—but not enough—that these devices are tricky, especially when not constantly checked up by logical inquiry into the meaning of the results obtained. For instance, the placing of a "trend line" is an arbitrary matter about which two equally expert observers may not agree, and yet a change in its placing may materially alter the conclusions to be drawn about the swings of cyclical series above and below it. And by sufficient statistical manipulation a high degree of correlation can be achieved between almost any two curves, whether there is any logical connection between them or not.

There follows a description of the methods used by Babson, the Brookmire service, the Harvard Economic Service, Moody's and Standard Statistics. All have been uncertain, all have frequently modified their practices, and all are open to theoretical objections by one who has studied the subject. A striking commentary on the Harvard Service, not noted by these authors, is furnished by the industry of Mr. Karl Karsten, who by inverting one of the Harvard curves, changing the lag, relocating the trend line, and employing other statistical refinements, has produced a degree of correlation between the predicting curve and that predicted which is almost twice as high as that shown by the Harvard interpretation. That is all very impressive. But Mr. Karsten comes out with a chart which incidentally indicates that we have been undergoing a severe depression in 1925 and 1926. His explanation of this anomaly is that industry has probably been depressed in comparison with the boom we might have had on the basis of our present large gold supply! If the validation of predictions comes to be made on the basis of comparison of actual conditions with what might have been, magic wins the day.

After a brief and necessarily inadequate survey of the theories of the business cycle, the authors state their hypothesis: that chief importance is to be attributed to advances and declines in construction work as the cause of the other phenomena of the cycle. The thesis is supported in this volume only by a few casual remarks. In the present state of knowledge, it is, doubtless, as reasonable as most of the others. The business man is then provided with a guide to the ingredients, if he wants to make home brew

instead of subscribing to any of the "Services." This guide is a competent description of the more important statistical series now available, with comments on their significance.

The chief merit of the book is that it diminishes the magical prestige which may attach to any one system of forecasting, and shows that everyone can be his own fortune-teller. But it does not lessen the impression that the practical man, in spite of his need for prompt decision, cannot have much certainty about the future until economic science has furnished us with a sounder theoretical basis for prediction.

GEORGE SOULE.

Samuel Butler's Family

Samuel Butler and His Family Relations, by Mrs. R. S. Garnett. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. 228 pages. \$3.75.

MRS. R. S. GARNETT is related to the family of Samuel Butler and a collection of their private papers has come into her hands. From these letters and diaries, it appears that the Butler rectory was by no means the nest of goblins described in *The Way of All Flesh*. Canon Butler, though stupid and harsh in his relations with his son, seems more often to have been found kindly and genial: he wrote playful verses to his wife and affectionate letters to his grand-children, and he seems to have been far more interested in botany than in theology. One at least of Samuel's two sisters loved and sympathized with her brother. Mrs. Garnett's account of the whole situation is impartial and plausible. It is quite evident from what she tells us, as one had already suspected from Butler's own works, that the author of *The Way of All Flesh* suffered from an inveterate inferiority complex, which manifested itself in fears and suspicions almost amounting to delusions of persecution. He had been intimidated in boyhood by his father, and he had never succeeded in standing up to him, with the result that he preserved the resentments of adolescence through the whole of his mature life, and while, to conciliate his parents and his sisters, he pretended to maintain dutiful and affectionate relations with them, he was in secret distilling the venom in his heart into *The Way of All Flesh*.

Butler's novel is a remarkable production, but one suspects that the readers of the future may find that our generation has praised it extravagantly. If there can be such a thing as a masterpiece inspired by resentment of this sort, *The Way of All Flesh* is such a masterpiece. But is there not an important difference between the resentment of such a satirist as Butler—or of Sinclair Lewis—and the indignation of a Swift or a Voltaire? The latter have arrived at intellectual maturity and they inspire us, not with a hatred of individuals or of particular groups or classes, but with a radical dissatisfaction with humanity. Swift purges us with horror; Butler more often merely makes us feel uncomfortable, and there is something a little ignoble, not about his work as a whole—there are deeply touching and even tragic passages in *Erewhon* on the very subject, that of family relations, which in *The Way of All Flesh* provokes nothing but corrosive irony—but about this book in particular. After all, it was not Butler and Bernard Shaw who first discovered that the members of one family could be fiercely antagonistic and mutually destructive. The family of *CEdipus* were as violent, as bigoted and as bad-tempered as the Pontifexes, yet no one of them was ever allowed by their chronicler to monopolize the ear of the public with a special piece of pleading against the rest.

E. W.

Surveying Parnassus

Which Way Parnassus? by Percy Marks. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 246 pages. \$2.

MR. MARKS in this volume again demonstrates his versatility. Three years ago he produced his widely discussed *The Plastic Age*, a novel of college life; and very shortly thereafter appeared *Martha*, a novel concerned with the maladjustments of a half-caste girl. Now to these he adds the present collection of essays which, taken together, make a more or less complete survey of the major problems of the American college.

The author in his foreword sets out "to present the many problems in which our colleges are entangled, to analyze and discuss them . . . and occasionally to offer remedies." Especially does he emphasize his disapproval of such muckraking as that of Upton Sinclair in *The Goose Step*, and one reads his introductory remarks with pleasant anticipations of a cool, careful, and painstakingly fair review of the college and its so numerous difficulties. But unfortunately the author finds it hard to avoid these practices which he disapproves in others. On page five he writes of the "woeful weakness of the muckraker's position," and of how "a muckraker inevitably impresses a careful reader with his excitement and his bias," but in his later chapters he slashes into the faculty and the alumni with a heated violence very similar to the sort of thing he condemns. He may not, of course, call his writing muckraking; but whatever he chooses to call it, it is, regrettably, rather feverish.

In fairness to Mr. Marks, however, it must be made clear that there are but two chapters—those which deal with the faculty and the alumni—which may be criticized for unnecessary and unhappy vigor. Yet the remaining chapters also have their serious deficiency. To the present reviewer they seem superficial. The chapter on college presidents, for example, comes to very little more than an amplification of the not altogether inobvious observation that the president has a difficult and nerve-racking job. The chapter on trustees contributes very little more than the opinion that the college is safer in the hands of the present trustees than it would be if entrusted to the faculty. The discussion of the undergraduates, in turn, brings together conclusions no more profound than these: "the average undergraduate has at best a mediocre mind"; "a college which grants a degree is an educational institution, not a business college or a trade school"; "examinations test a student's information rather than his ability"; "education begins not in college, but at the mother's breast, or as some authorities maintain, before birth." And so on through the chapters on athletics, fraternities, and student activities.

Generalizations of this sort will not help solve the college problem. The author in his foreword hopes that he may "arouse others more mature and wiser to a discussion that will bring practical results"; but conclusions of the sort quoted above are scarcely likely to have the effect of exciting persons who are "wiser and more mature," because, by reason of their maturity and their wisdom, they are quite likely to have arrived at them already. What such men seek, it may be supposed, are explanations of why things are as they are and practicable programs for improving them.

This is not, however, to suggest that these essays should not be read—and widely. They may serve to inform rah-rah alumni, people who have never been to college, and

undergraduates, that the college is not the paradise they suppose it to be: the realization of that fact by a larger number of people will do much to prepare the way for the constructive educator who must now, unfortunately, carry on his program against a tremendous amount of opposition.

W. H. COWLEY.

Fiction Notes

Alpha, by Emery Bálint. Translated from the Hungarian by Louis Rittenberg. New York: The Macy-Masius Company. \$2.

ALPHA is European. For Americans, more decoding of it will be necessary than most of them can manage. There is genius buried here, a kind of nail-gnawing, hungry, tortured talent that says valuable things with such nerve-wracked hullabaloo that they are lost. The whole book is like a nervous breakdown—stretches of hideous blackness lit up with flashes of uncanny insight and interrupted by sharp little pictures which, as high peaks through shifting fog, seem to have no relation to the rest of the scenery. Fragments of it are beautiful, as if accidentally; a fraction of it is interesting to the casual reader; a good deal more is interesting, if you remember that Europe, particularly intelligent Europe, has been for years the prey of one vast nervous breakdown; and the greater part of it is a groping nightmare. You stumble through darkness, and if you trip, it may be on an illusion, or it may be on actual garbage. The two are here confounded. But it doesn't matter. Nothing matters, if you let Alpha take hold of your mind. Nothing matters, and everything is all wrong, but down at the very bottom of the heap of mud and blackness something is stirring, madly, bitterly, hatefully, pitifully; stirring, and moving ahead, toward the dim light at the end of the long, long crazy tunnel.

Song of Life, by Fannie Hurst. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.

PARTS of some of these stories are a shade better than anything else Miss Hurst has done. If the whole were as good as the parts, or even two-thirds as good, there would be no other woman novelist in the country who could hold a candle to her. But if some of these parts belong to life, the wholes belong decidedly to fiction, or even to fictioneering: natural events, deeply felt people forcibly cramped into a scheme too preconceived to allow of their human growth. I find nearly all Miss Hurst's endings warped and trained, like a plant on a queer-shaped lattice. A few of the stories, in particular *Who Are You?* are painfully bad all the way through. But when all these reservations are recorded, what remains? Even as little as a page here, a page there, has power to sweep them all away, and Miss Hurst's sizzling sense of life, her fiery transfusion of it into words, no matter how tortured, how garish, how sentimental, is what we are chiefly aware of in the end. Reticence, perfect taste, cool judgment, a respect for the traditional use of words—all these Miss Hurst lacks, at times dismally. Yet would one deplore the day that found these negative qualities ruling her heart and her mind. What do they matter, so long as she is gifted with the rarest gift, divine energy, so long as she keeps her volcanic splurge and splutter, her hot and sympathetic blood, and her seat so near the hearthstone of life?

The Story of a Wonder Man, being the Autobiography of Ring Lardner. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$1.75.

YES, Ring Lardner could write a very interesting autobiography. He has known (personally) all sorts of people, gamblers, editors, ball-players, actresses, and has had a most interesting life. And with all this in mind, the syndicate which handles Lardner's work asked him to write his autobiography. He reluctantly agreed. At last the syndicate began to receive the stuff. Chapter One. "News of the Lardner boy's birth [before there were telephones or telegraphs] had to be flashed to the world by runners. Sparing no expense, the parents hired Paavo Nurmi to notify distant relatives." No, that wasn't quite what the syndicate meant. Did Lardner entirely get their idea? Chapter Two. "My oldest brother was christened Ring Once For Ice Water; another one, Ring Twice for Towels; and I, Ring Three Times For Good Luck." The syndicate was more uneasy. No, Lardner hadn't exactly understood. Hadn't he known (personally) a lot of interesting people, like Dempsey and Swope and Cobb? Chapter Three. "We left Niles [Mich.] at noon on the third day of March and did not reach Duluth till the morning of the sixth. This was before the era of patent couplers and the cars of a train were fastened to one another with gay ribbons." Somewhere between Chapter Two and Chapter Twenty-five ("When I returned to New York I found awaiting me an invitation to attend an exclusive luncheon at the Plaza in honor of the Queen of Roumania. Those excluded were the assistant bell captain and Joe Murioli of the men's wash-room")—somewhere in between, the syndicate may be assumed to have given up hope, and to have resigned itself to sheer irresponsible nonsense, of the kind that only Lardner can turn out—easy, uneven, surprising, not quite up to his mark as a whole, but dotted with those wild flashes of 24-carat craziness which make one laugh out loud.

R. L.

Contributors

MORRIS R. COHEN is professor of philosophy at the College of the City of New York. His article on Spinoza, appearing in this issue, was read at the International Commemoration Exercises recently held at the Hague on the 250th anniversary of Spinoza's death.

ALFRED KREYMBORG has published a number of volumes of verse and short plays, among them *Mushrooms*, *Plays for Poet-Mimes*, and *Plays for Merry Andrews*.

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